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LIFE-AFFIRMING AND DEATH-AFFIRMING ELEMENTS IN THE LYRICAL POETRY OF EVGENIJ A. BARATYNSKIJ.

University — Université

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Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

MASTER OF ARTS.

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
1984.	DR. ROBERT L. BUSCH.

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LIFE-AFFIRMING AND DEATH-AFFIRMING ELEMENTS IN THE LYRICAL POETRY OF EVGENIJ A. BARATYNSKIJ

by

MARGARET T. BRADLEY

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

IN

RUSSIAN LITERATURE

DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1984

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

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TITLE OF THESIS LIFE-AFFIRMING AND DEATH-AFFIRMING ELEMENTS IN THE LYRICAL POETRY OF EVGENIJ A. BARATYNSKIJ

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED MASTER OF ARTS

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED FALL 1984

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Abstract

In this study, thirteen lyrical poems by the Russian romantic poet, Evgenij Abramovič Baratynskij (1800-1842) are examined from the point of view of "death-affirmation" and "life-affirmation". That is, death-affirmation is the advocacy of phenomena which are not dynamic and vibrant, e.g. passivity, peace, hopelessness, sorrow, pain and death itself. Correspondingly, life-affirmation involves phenomena which throb with vitality, such as activity, turmoil, hope, love, happiness, merriment, pleasure and life itself.

The poems concerned have been selected for the salience of the relevant elements involved therein. Three main classifications have been made: (i)five poems which have as their foundation the theme of passivity and peace: "Rodina (Sel'skaja èlegija)" (1821), "Dve doli" (1823), "Beznadežnost'" (1823), "Istina" (1823) and Smert'" (1828); (ii)three poems which juxtapose life and death: "Čerep" (1824), "Poslednjaja smert'" (1827) and "Smert' (Podražanie A. Šen'e)" (1828); and (iii)five poems which juxtapose pleasure and pain or sorrow: "Poslanie k B(aronu) Del'vigu" (1820), "Vesna" (1820), "Vesel'e i gore" (1824), "D(el'vig)u" (1825) and "Doroga žizni" (1825).

In addition to a stylistic and thematic examination of these works, which are the original, unrevised versions, due note has been made of variations in the later, revised versions. Attention to such variations renders useful insights into the evolution of the poet's style and world-view.

By the end of this study, it becomes evident that, in the selection of poetry herein, death-affirmation predominates, although various opposing outlooks may be manifested by the poet in poems which are written within the same year. The predominance of death-affirming elements is not unexpected, in view of the poet's own pessimism and the similarly gloomy inclinations of fellow Romantic poets of the time, not to mention the atmosphere of discontent and unrest prevalent in early nineteenth century Russia.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the academic assistance of my thesis supervisor, Dr. R.L. Busch and of the members of my thesis committee, Dr. E. Mozejko and Dr. O. Zujewskij, and the typing assistance given by Mrs. Doreen Warchola and Mrs. Jean Wilman.

I would like to make special mention of the invaluable help and constant encouragement given by Mr. Ashraf Hasan and by my parents, Mr. Patrick Bradley and Mrs. Eileen Bradley.

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I. Introduction

Despite the general consensus that Evgenij Abramovič Baratynskij (1800-1844) was A. S. Puškin's greatest contemporary poet of the 1820's, he has remained somewhat obscure. It seems decidedly unjust that this has been so, as Baratynskij was a poet of great talent, whose work exhibited considerable originality and aesthetic skill, notwithstanding that he was very much "of his time" and often reminds one of Lord G. G. Byron, K. N. Batjuškov, V. A. Žukovskij, A.-M.-L. de Lamartine and so on in his mood and style. With regard, in fact, to his talent in elegy-writing, Puškin himself remarked, in his essay "Stixotvorenija Evgenija Baratynskogo", that "v ètom rode on pervenstvuet".[1]

Before commencing this study of life-affirming and death-affirming elements in Baratynskij's lyrical poetry, it is appropriate to give a biographical sketch of the poet. Baratynskij was born on February 19, 1800 in the small country estate of Mara,[2] in Tambov district, and received an upbringing characteristic of a child of noble (in this case, apparently Polish) blood.[3] In spring, 1812, at the age of twelve, he went to Petersburg to study at the private Vil'ka-Kollins German boarding school,[4] which was considered one of the city's best.[5] A quiet, sensitive boy, he became very fond of seventeenth and eighteenth century classical French literature (having learnt fluent French at home from an Italian tutor).[6] The school spent six months preparing Baratynskij for the entrance examination to the Pages' Corps. The preparation proved to be successful, as he was admitted into the Corps at the end of 1812.[7] Baratynskij presently began to grow restless and dissatisfied. He began to day-dream of naval service, which he regarded as being full of danger and romance. To him, the service for which he was being trained was too sheltered, too remote from the scene of battle during wartime. He wrote to his mother:

> "Ja ne smogu služit' v gvardii: ee sliškom beregut. Vo vremja vojny ona ničego ne delaet i ostaetsja v postydnom bezdejstvii ... Ja čuvstvuju, čto mne vsegda nužno čto-libo opasnoe, čtoby menja zanimalo, - inače ja skučaju."[8]

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[1] A.S. Puškin, "Stixotvorenija Evgenija Baratynskogo", Sobranie sočinenij v desjati tomax, ed. D. Blagoj and S.M. Bondi, vol.6, Moscow, 1962, p.271.
[2] B Dees, E.A. Baratynsky (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972), p.13, p.16.
[3] G. Kjetsaa, Evgenij Baratynskij: Žizn' i tvorčestvo (Oslo, Bergen, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1973), p.1.
[4] Ibid., p.13.
[5] L.G. Frizman, Tvorčeskij put' Baratynskogo (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka", 1966), p.9.
[6] Dees, op.cit., p.16.
[7] Frizman, op.cit., p.9.
[8] Frizman, op.cit., p.9.

Stories about brigands, particularly those by Schiller - such as Die Räuber - persuaded Baratynskij that a brigand's life was "zavidnejšaja v svete." [9] He and some friends formed a group which took as its name "Obščestvo Mstitelej",[10] and which proceeded to perpetrate a series of mischievous acts, which were climaxed, in February, 1816, by one which was to produce serious repercussions for Baratynskij: the theft of a gold snuff box containing five hundred rubles.[11] Two months after the identification of his friend Xanykov and himself as the culprits, an order from Aleksandr I excluded them both from the Corps and barred them from admission into any service save a military one - and then only as privates. [12] This disgrace made a very painful impression upon Baratynskij, one which would long haunt him. Its impact would frequently be reflected in his poetry, particularly during the first half of the 1820's.

At the end of 1818, he returned to Petersburg to enlist as a private in the army. There, an old friend from the Pages' Corps, Aleksandr Krenitsyn, introduced him to the poets of the "Lycée" circle - which included Puškin, A.A. Del'vig, and V.K. Kjuxel'beker. [13] On February 8, 1819, he became a private in the Lejb Gvardija, [14] and moved into an apartment with Del'vig, who introduced him to the Petersburg literary salons, where he met D.V. Davydov, N.I. Gnedič, V.A. Žukovskij, and so on. [15] Such acquaintances naturally provided an atmosphere which was conducive to the blossoming of Baratynskij's own creative tendencies.

Shortly after Baratynskij was promoted to the rank of non-commissioned officer in January, 1820, he was transferred to Finland. He and his friends tended to regard this transfer as exile - coinciding as it did with Puškin's exile to Southern Russia. It was hardly total exile, however, for Baratynskij's regiment moved around often, and he spent leaves and even tours of duty in Petersburg and Moscow. Although during these years which he spent in Finland (1820-1825), he portrayed himself as solitary and isolated, he in fact participated actively in the Petersburg literary groups. [16] In 1821, he joined the most

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[9]Ibid.
[10]Ibid., p.10.
[11]Dees, op.cit., p.17.
[12]Frizman, op.cit., p.10.
[13]Dees, op.cit., p.17.
[14]Kjetsaa, op.cit., p.49.
[15]For details, see Dees, op.cit., p.17.
[16]Ibid.

famous of them - the "Vol'noe obščestvo ljubitelej rossijskoj slovesnosti".[17]

Baratynskij's elegies, "Finljandija" (1820) and "Piry" (1820), had already focused attention on him, and he helped to create a "solitary", "isolated" image of himself.[18] In 1825, after his promotion (achieved through the persistent efforts of D.V. Davydov, P.A. Vjazemskij, V.A. Žukovskij and others) [19] to the rank of lieutenant,[20], Baratynskij finally left Finland for Moscow. He retired from the army, and, soon afterwards, married a landowner's daughter, Nastasija L'vovna Engel'gardt. She had acute critical faculties with regard to poetry, and many of her suggestions were to become incorporated into Baratynskij's works. [21]

Upon Baratynskij's arrival in Moscow, Puškin and Vjazemskij introduced him to the Moscow literary salons, including that of Zinaida Volkonskaja, which was frequented by the "ljubomudrye" - advocates of German philosophy - particularly of Friedrich Schelling's. To this group belonged A.S. Xomjakov, I.V. Kireevskij, V.F. Odoevskij, S.P. Ševyrev, and D.V. Venevitinov. It was around this time, too, that Baratynskij met N.M. Jazykov and A. Mickiewicz. His first collection of poems, Stixotvorenija Evgenija Baratynskogo, appeared in November, 1827, and received almost unanimous praise from the critics. He began to work, shortly afterwards, in a government land surveying office. [22]

With Kireevskij - six years his junior - Baratynskij was to form an intimate, ten-year friendship. A quasi-dependency developed on Baratynskij's part with regard to Kireevskij, who became his literary mentor - even guiding his reading, especially towards the works of J.J. Rousseau and A.F. Villemain (a popularizer of Schelling). During 1828 and 1829, Baratynskij participated in the editorship of the Moskovskij Vestnik, with which Kireevskij was closely associated. [23]

In 1831, following Del'vig's death, the former group of Petersburg poets finally fell apart. Simultaneously, the popularity of poetry, Baratynskij's included, went into a decline. [24]

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[17] Ibid., p.55.
[18] Ibid., p.18.
[19] Ibid., p.19.
[20] Ibid., p.13.
[21] Ibid., p.19.
[22] Ibid., pp.19-20.
[23] Ibid., p.20.
[24] Ibid., p.21.

In 1832, Baratynskij began to participate in the work of Kireevskij's new periodical, the Evropeec, which was closed down by the regime of Nicholas I almost as soon as it began to appear. In Moscow, he began to help Kireevskij and the Moskovskij Vestnik's collaborators to organize a new periodical, the Moskovskij Nabljudatel'. Baratynskij's "Poslednij poèt" appeared in its first issue of March, 1835. The Nabljudatel', as both the Moskovskij Vestnik and the Evropeec before it, had as its foundation Schelling's philosophy - but now that of the later, religious and mystical Schelling. After 1835, Baratynskij published nothing in the Nabljudatel', [25] and his second collection of poems, published in April, 1835, was received by the critics with little enthusiasm. [26] The degree to which he became demoralised during the 'thirties was evidenced in a letter to Pletnev in early 1839, where he complained of fatigue and dejection, and claimed that the preceding decade had been even more agonising than the years of isolation in Finland.[27]

In 1842, his final small collection of verse, Sumerki, was published, producing little reaction. A trip to Western Europe in 1843 revived Baratynskij's depressed spirits. He intended to settle in Petersburg upon his return, but died suddenly in Naples on the morning of June 29th, 1844. His death was scarcely noticed by the Russian literary press. [28]

This thesis will examine the occurrence and nature of "death-affirming" elements in Baratynskij's lyrical poetry, and will attempt to analyse how they, in some instances, are replaced by, or coexist with, somewhat less prominent "life-affirming" motifs. Such a subject of study has been chosen owing to the fact that it is central to Baratynskij's work. We will strive to focus upon features which are particularly characteristic of Baratynskij, rather than those which are conventional, and hence found in many poets of the time.

With regard to the aforementioned "death-affirming" tendency, there was in Baratynskij, to an unusually extreme degree, an almost self-indulgent inclination towards morbidity, nihilism, and a currently fashionable "Byronic" type of melancholy. His disenchantment with life began to manifest itself in him when he was a mere boy. He himself acknowledged:

"S samogo detstva ja tjagotilsja zavisimost'ju i byl ugrjum, byl nesčastliv. V

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[25] Ibid., pp.21-22.
[26] Kjetsaa, op.cit., p.177.
[27] Dees, op.cit., p.23.
[28] Ibid., p.24.

molodosti sud'ba vzjala menja v svoi ruki..."[29]

And, in an Autumn, 1823 letter to V.A. Žukovskij, he stated that, in his youth, he had read by preference those poets whose verse reminds one of life's brevity.[30] Although Baratynskij's "melancholy" was not unique (and perhaps owed much to fashion), his poetry's treatment of it was. As Glynn Barratt comments:

> "His originality lay in taking an entirely novel attitude towards well-worked and ancient themes, including some that were in fashion in his youth. That attitude ... lay in the supposedly objective and calm viewing of all personal distress." [31]

One may dispute with this critic, however, on the point of Baratynskij's "objective and calm viewing of all personal distress" - since, as will be seen, the poet does not always view personal distress objectively and calmly - although it is true that such is generally the case.

The "life-affirming" tendency, with which the "death-affirming" tendency contrasts, was particularly stimulated by love's emotions and passions, and by the beauties of nature. What there was of a "life-affirming" tendency diminished in the course of time, since, as Glynn Barratt observes:

> "... year by year, the certainty of never again loving was displaced, in his poetic consciousness, by the more sombre certainty of life's futility. Personal depression was thus nurtured and transformed into a sense of cosmic uselessness, in Baratynskij's middle years."[32]

Many of his poems, especially the later ones, concern themselves with the theme of death : his attitude towards it being now horror-struck dread, now resignation - or even an almost joyful anticipation. Benjamin Dees comments:

> "Inability to adapt harmoniously to earthly life leads him to look upward, but his visions of eternity prove to be evanescent. Preoccupation with the certainty of death itself is more characteristic for him than consistent construction of a life after death or belief in that life." [33]

Sometimes, too, both "life-affirming" and "death-affirming" elements are present in one and the same poem (e.g., in "Čerep").

In the chapters to follow, I intend to examine the versification, style, imagery and attitudes or outlooks contained in poems belonging to each tendency. I will endeavour to bring out common points, inconsistencies or incongruities - with the object of arriving at a

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[29]Kjetsaa, op.cit., p.1.
[30] G. Barratt, "A Note on the Development of Baratynskij's Elegiac Verse", Slavic and East European Review, LV, 2 (April, 1977), p.175.
[31]Ibid.
[32]Ibid., p.176.
[33]Dees, op.cit., p.90.

more comprehensive understanding of the poet and his work.

The text upon which this research shall be based is the Polnoe sobranie sočinenij E.A. Boratynskago, tom 1, published in 1914 by the Imperatorskaja Akademija Nauk, and edited by M.L. Gofman. As Gofman emphasizes in his introductory notes, the poems contained in this collection are in their original, unrevised form. This contrasts with those contained in the Sovetskij Pisatel''s Polnoe sobranie stixotvorenij (1957, edited by E. Kuprejanova and I. Medvedeva), whose versions were revised by the poet years after he had written the originals. Although significant textual variants shall be noted in this study, the original versions are focused upon in that they promise to render a more truthful picture of chronological developments in the evolution of the poet's style and "Weltanschauung" - rather than one picture which is coloured by the mature style and modified world-view of the older Baratynskij.

Each chapter of this study will examine a particular key aspect of life-affirmation and death-affirmation in Baratynskij's work. The second chapter, entitled "Baratynskij's Perspective on 'Peace' and 'Turmoil'", will consider the poet's attitude towards and treatment of the theme of various forms of passivity and peace in five poems: "Rodina (Sel'skaja èlegija)" (1821), "Dve doli" (1823), "Beznadežnost'" (1823), "Istina" (1823) and "Smert'" (1828). The third chapter, entitled "Life and Death", will investigate Baratynskij's juxtaposition of life and death in three poems, "Čerep" (1824), "Poslednjaja smert' "(1827) and "Smert' (Podražanie A. Šen'e)" (1828). And the fourth chapter, entitled "Pleasure and Pain", focuses upon the juxtaposition of experiences of pleasure and those of pain or sorrow in five poems, "Poslanie k B(aronu) Del'vigu" (1820), "Vesna" (1820), "Vesel'e i gore" (1824), "D(el'vig)u" (1825) and "Doroga žizni" (1825). It is hoped that a study of such a "cross section" of Baratynskij's work will assist one to obtain a multi-faceted picture of his overall outlook.

II. Baratynskij's Perspective on 'Peace' and 'Turmoil'

There exists in Baratynskij's work a certain fascination with the theme of passivity and peace, which he presents to us in various guises: as an abstract idea, as an implemented philosophy of life, and as an attribute of death. This chapter shall discuss five poems which provide a cross section of his treatment of this theme: these are "Rodina (Sel'skaja èlegija)" (1821); "Dve doli" (1823); "Beznadežnost'" (1823); "Istina" (1823); and "Smert'", (1828).

In each of these poems, with the exception of "Istina", peace and passivity are depicted in a positive manner. It is interesting to consider these poems chronologically, in order to obtain a consecutive perspective on the treatment of this theme.

Firstly, we have "Rodina (Sel'skaja èlegija)" (1821)[34] , a poem of sixty lines written in iambic hexametric alexandrine couplets, which, Kjetsaa notes, [35] is in the popular tradition of praise for the pastoral life.

Rodina

(sel'skaja èlegija)

I Ja vozvraščusja k vam, polja moix otcov,
2 Dubravy mirnye, svjaščennyj serdcu krov;
3 Ja vozvraščusja k vam, domašnie ikony!
4 Puskaj drugie čtut revnivyj sud nevežd.
5 Svobodnyj nakonec ot vetrenyx nadežd,
6 Ot bespokojnyx snov, ot suetnyx želanij,
7 Ispiv bezvremenno vsju čašu ispytanij,
8 Ne prizrak ščastija, no ščast'e nužno mne.
9 Ustalyj truženik, spešu k rodnoj strane
10 Zasnut' želannym snom pod krovleju rodimoj.
11 O dom otečeskij! o kraj vsegda ljubimoj![36]
12 Rodnye nebesa! Nezvučnyj golos moj
13 V stixax zadumčivyx vas pel v strane čužoj.
14 Vy mne poveete spokojstviem i ščast'em.
15 Kak v pristani plovec, ispytannyj nenast'em,
16 S ulybkoj slušaet, nad bezdnoju vossev,
17 I buri groznyj svist, i voln mjatežnyj rev:
18 Tak, nebo ne molja o počestjax i zlate,
19 Spokojnyj domosed v otečestvennoj xate,
20 Ukryvšis' ot tolpy vzyskatel'nyx sudej,
21 V krugu druzej moix, v krugu sem'i moej,
22 Ja budu izdali gljadet' na buri sveta.
23 Net, net, ne premenju svjaščennogo obeta!

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[34]M.L. Gofman, Polnoe Sobranie Sočinejij E. A. Boratynskago, tom pervyj. (S.-Peterburg: Imperatorskaja Akademija Nauk, 1914), pp.21-22. Hereafter, all poetry citations will be from this volume.
[35]Kjetsaa, op.cit., p.338.
[36]Except where graphic and phonetic considerations dictate its preservation, the old orthography is modernized in the transliteration.

24 Puskaj letit k šatram beztrepetnyj geroj;
25 Puskaj krovavyx bitv ljubovnik molodoj
26 S volnen'em učitsja, gubja časy zlatye,
27 Nauke sozidat' tverdyni boevye:
28 Ja s detstva poljubil sladčajšie trudy.
29 Prileżnyj, mirnyj plug, vzryvajuščij brazdy,
30 Počtenee meča: poleznyj v skromnoj dole,
31 Xoču vozdelyvat' otečeskoe pole.
32 Orataj, vetxix dnej dostigšij nad soxoj,
33 V zabotax sladostnyx nastavnik budet moj.
34 Mne drjaxlogo otca syny trudoljubivy
35 Pomogut utučnjat' nasledstvennye nivy.
36 A ty, moj staryj drug, moj vernyj dobroxot,
37 Prileżnyj Jakov moj! ty, pervyj ogorod
38 Na otčeskix poljax razvedšij v dni bylie,
39 Ty povedeš' menja v sady svoi gustye,
40 Derev'ev i cvetov rasskažeš' imena.
41 Ja sam, kodga s nebes roskošnaja vesna
42 Poveet negoju voskresnuvšej Prirode,
43 S tjaželym zastupom javljusja v ogorode;
44 Pridu s toboj sadit' koren'ja i cvety.
45 O podvig blagostnyj! ne tščeten budeš' ty
46 Boginja pažitej priznatel'nej Fortuny!
47 Dlja nix bezvestnyj vek, dlja nix svirel' i struny;
48 One dostupny vsem i mne za tjažkij trud
49 Plodami sočnymi obil'no vozdadut.
50 Ot grjad i zastupa spešu k poljam i plugu;
51 A tam, gde ručeek po barxatnomu lugu
52 Katit zadumčivo pustynnye strui,
53 V vesennij jasnyj den' ja sam, druz'ja moi,
54 U brega nasažu lesok uedinennyj,
55 I lipu svežuju, i topol' osrebrennyj;
56 V teni ix otdoxnet moj pravnuk molodoj:
57 Tam družba nekogda sokroet pepel moj
58 I vmesto mramora položit nad grobnicej
59 Moj zastup i topor mež liroj i cevnicej.

Baratynskij articulates, in the first two lines his desire to return to plough the fields of his forefathers.

Ja vozvraščusja k vam, polja moix otcov,

Dubravy mirnye, svjaščennyj serdcu krov...

The reader is given a hint of Baratynskij's idealisation of pastoral life by his use of the highly poetic word "dubravy". He feels that he would be happy with a life of peace and gentle pleasures, at one with nature, and announces, in lines four and five, his intention of passivity with regard to those things after which the urbanized actively strive:

Puskaj drugie čtut priličija zakony;

Puskaj drugie čtut revnivyj sud nevežd.

The lexical and semantic parallelism of the repetition in line five of "Puskaj drugie čtut" conveys the impression of the firmness of the poet's decision to renounce what he regards as not worthy of being taken seriously. He asserts that the country life for which

he craves means freedom from what has been "imprisoning" him:

Svobodnyj nakonec ot vetrenyx nadežd

Ot bespokojnyx snov, ot suetnyx želanij...[37]

The caesura in these lines serves to delineate the things from which the poet seeks to be free. In the following line, Baratynskij employs the metaphor, "Ispiv bezvremenno vsju čašu ispytanij", to inform the reader that he feels that he has known too soon the "active" experiences which life has to offer, and further on, he effectively describes the "happiness" which he thought to have glimpsed in the past as merely a "prizrak sčastija". He no longer wants a "phantom" of happiness, but genuine happiness instead. He sees himself as an "ustalyj truženik" who is hastening towards his homeland, under whose roof he desires to sleep.

At the time Baratynskij wrote this elegy (1821), he was - as he liked to portray himself - "in exile" with the Russian army in Finland, and he did indeed yearn for home. In lines twelve to fifteen, he addresses his home in dramatic style:

O dom otečeskij! o kraj vsegda ljubimoj!

Rodnye nebesa! Nezvučnyj golos moj

V stixax zadumčivyx vas pel v strane čužoj.

Vy mne poveete spokojstviem i sčast'em.

The emotional effect of lines twelve and thirteen is enhanced by the concentration of exclamation marks, two of them coming after the caesura, which Baratynskij uses effectively in this poem. In lines seventeen and eighteen, he uses a simile to liken himself in his homeland to a seafarer in a haven, who, having endured foul weather,

S ulybkoj slušaet,nad bezdnoju vossev,

I buri groznyj svist, i voln mjatežnyj rev.

He will not, he has decided, pray to heaven for honours and gold, but will, rather, be a

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[37]In the Soviet revised "canonical" version, E. Kuprejanova i I. Medvedeva, E.A. Baratynskij, Polnoe Sobranie Stixotvorenij (Leningrad: Sovetskij Pisatel', 1957),(pp.68-69), published according to an 1827 revision, lines six and seven read:

Svobodnyj nakonec ot suetnyx nadežd,

Ot bespokojnyx snov, ot vetrenyx želanij...

A striking interchanging of "suetnyx" and "vetrenyx" has taken place, and the reason for such a revision appears to have more to do with a desire for greater assonance than for any semantic modifications (which are only slight). One notes that, in this revision, the initial phonemes of both "suetnyx" and "vetrenyx", (s) and (v) respectively, are closely tied to the phoneme which immediately precedes "ot" : that is, the (s) of "nakone(ts)" and the (v) of "snov" (despite the fact that this (v) devoices).

"spokojnyj domosed v otečestvennoj xate".[38]

The rhyming of "xata" (a peasant dwelling) with the Church Slavonicism "zlato" enhances the contrastive effect in the juxtaposition of something "lowly" and prosaic with something which is traditionally considered lofty. He clearly spurns what most others of his social standing hold dear.

A strong element of "escapism", of the desire to take "refuge" from worldly things which are vexing and difficult, is present in "Rodina". It manifests itself particularly clearly in lines twenty-one to twenty-three:

Ukryvšis' ot tolpy vzyskatel'nyx sudej,
V krugu druzej moix, v krugu sem'i moej,
Ja budu izdali gljadet' na buri sveta.

The use, in line twenty-one, of the caesura to echo "V krugu druzej moix" by "v krugu sem'i moej" underlines Baratynskij's yearning to find himself again in a safe, comforting circle of friends and family. In his intention of watching the world's turmoil from a distance he is thus extremely passive and detached, but a dramatic note is sounded in line twenty-four's

Net, net, ne premenju svjaščennogo obeta!

Those activities which are traditionally regarded as being heroic and "manly", Baratynskij spurns:

Puskaj letit k šatram beztrepetnyj geroj;
Puskaj krovavyx bitv ljubovnik molodoj
S volnen'em učitsja, gubja časy zlatye,
Nauke sozidat' tverdyni boevye:[39]
Ja s detstva poljubil sladčajšie trudy.

With the use of the poetic Church Slavonicism "zlatye", Baratynskij extols the happiness

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[38]In the revised version, line twenty reads:
Spokojnyj domosed v moej bezvestnoj xate.
Here, the replacement of "otečestvennoj" by "moej bezvestnoj" makes the statement that the place in which the poet will isolate himself from the world's turmoil has no links whatsoever with the world of other people: it is simply "mine", and no one else's, not even the "fatherland's". The obscurity suggested by the bookish term, "bezvestnyj" amplifies this impression of remote quasi-invisibility. In addition, extra assonance is created by the echo of the (mo) in "domosed" by the (mo) in "moej".

[39]In the revised version, line twenty-eight reads:
Nauke razmerjat' okopy boevye...
The "razmerjat' okopy" of this version contains similar, albeit perhaps more direct overtones of warfare.

and "goldenness" which, he maintains, could and should be in man's life if one does not destroy one's precious hours in activities which are futile or themselves destructive. Here, the phoneme (b) serves to organize the semantic contrast between military strife and love understood as peace and harmony.

The repetition of the sound (p) in lines thirty to thirty-two creates an impression of stable continuity, which is, Baratynskij believes, inherent in the life for which he yearns:

Prileżnyj, mirnyj plug, vzryvajuščij brazdy,
Počtennee meča : poleznyj v skromnoj dole,
Xoču vozdelyvat' otečeskoe pole.

He praises that life, through his use of the loftily poetic "brazdy", and through his statement that he values the plough more than the sword.

A certain nostalgia is felt for the "past", in the description of the ploughman,

Orataj, vetxix dnej dostigšij nad soxoj...

This man, so below the poet in social standing, will be, "v zabotax sladostnyx", his "nastavnik", a position of superiority reinforced by the use of the loftily poeticism, "orataj". As the poet turns (in lines thirty-seven to forty-five) to address Jakov, who works as gardener on the family land, one is struck, particularly in lines thirty-seven and thirty-eight, by the high concentration of words which are suggestive of intimacy between the poet and this old servant: "ty", "moj", "drug", "vernyj" and "dobroxot". The repetitions of "ty" and "moj" in these lines forcefully underline this. A high concentration of the phonemes (t), and (d) (voiced and devoiced), in these two lines is also noteworthy, and has the effect of reinforcing the intimate air herein:

A ty, moj staryj drug, moj vernyj dobroxot,
Prileżnyj Jakov moj! ty, pervyj ogorod...[40]

In line forty-three, Nature is personified; luxuriant spring:

Poveet negoju voskresnuvšej Prirode...

and Baratynskij envisages himself appearing in the kitchen-garden in spring with a heavy spade. His promise to come and plant roots and flowers with Jakov (1.45) underscores

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[40]In the revised version, line thirty-eight reads:
Userdnyj pestun moj, ty, pervyj ogorod...
"Userdnyj pestun", which increases the t/d combination, creates an even more intimate picture than "prileżnyj Jakov", since it describes a person who eagerly reared the poet from infancy - rather than a person who is simply industrious.

the intimate identification of the poet with nature.

In lines forty-six to fifty, Baratynskij rapturously asserts the certainty of rewards for agrarian labours:

O podvig blagostnyj! ne tščeten budeš' ty:
Boginja pažitej priznatel'nej Fortuny!
Dlja nix bezvestnyj vek, dlja nix svirel' i struny;
One dostupny vsem i mne za tjažkij trud[41]
Plodami sočnymi obil'no vozdadut.

The exclamation marks of lines forty-six and forty-seven, "O *p*odvig *b*lagos*t*nyj! ne *t*ščeten *b*udeš *t*y: / *B*oginja *p*ažite*j* *p*riznate*l*'nej For*t*uny!", intensify the impression of rapture, which is underlined by the alliteration of the phonemes (p), (b), and (t) within these lines. A certain note of "paganism" comes into play in the poet's personification of the "Boginja pažitej" who is seen as more grateful than Fortune. He obviously resents the slights which he feels Fortune has committed against him in the world of "society" - and hence he himself will now reject "her" in favour of quieter fulfilment. Others may follow Fortune's call, but he will not; and the contrast between Fortune's perquisites and those of the Goddess of the pastures ("pažit'" being another highly poetic form) is made more striking via the repetition of "dlja nix" after the caesura (1.48):

Dlja nix bezvestnyj vek, dlja nix svirel' i struny...

In an interesting juxtaposition of opposing directions, "away from" and "towards", the poet now switches his attention from the beds and spade to the fields and plough (1.51):

Ot grjad i zastupa spešu k poljam i plugu...

A little stream rolls along a "barxatnyj lug": the adjective "barxatnyj" rendering a sensual, tactile impression, while the poetic "strui" is employed to refer to the little stream's water. Addressing these lines to his friends ("druz'ja moi"), Baratynskij promises that he himself shall, on a bright spring day, plant a small, isolated wood, a "lipa svežaja" and a "topol' osrebrennyj", by the streamlet's bank. In planting them, he will create a link with the more

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[41]The revised version reads:

Oni dostupny vsem i mne za legkij trud.

The replacement of the original version's "tjažkij" by "legkij" is surprising. The motive for the revision appears to be essentially semantic: a desire to emphasize that labour connected with the earth, for which the poet will be amply rewarded, is not onerous but light.

distant future - for his young great-grandson will, one day, rest in their shadow - and, there, his own "pepel" will some day be covered by his friends. ("družba" providing an interesting use of the collective noun instead of "druz'ja") In a romantic flight of fancy, he envisages that, instead of marble, a spade and axe between a lyre and musical pipe shall be placed over his tomb (11.59 and 60):

I vmesto mramora položit nad grobnicej
Moj zastup i topor mež liroj i cevnicej.[42]

So we see that, in the poet's idealised view of a quiet, passive life, removed from the social whirl but "close to the soil" of his forefathers, he finds happiness in passivity - and even the prospect of death does not seem to be one which mars that happiness. Rather, death is construably almost a continuation of this serene, peaceful contentment.

Whereas "Rodina" presents the theme of passivity and peace as an implemented philosophy of life, "Dve doli" (1823)[43] presents it in a more abstract manner. The poem consists of seven stanzas in iambic tetrameter; the rhyme-pattern is ABAB.

Dve doli

1 Dalo dve doli Providenie
2 Na vybor mudrosti ljudskoj:
3 Ili nadeždu i volnenie,
4 Il' beznadežnost' i pokoj.

5 Ver' tot nadežde obol'ščajuščej,
6 Kto bodr dušoju, bodr umom,
7 Liš' po molve raznovescajuščej
8 S Sud'boj nasmešlivoj znakom.

9 Nadejtes', junoši kipjaščie!
10 Letite: kryl'ja vam dany!
11 Dlja vas -- i zamysly blestjaščie,
12 I serdca plamennye sny!

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[42]In the revised version, lines fifty-nine and sixty read:
I vmesto mramora položit na grobnicu,
I mirnyj zastup moj i mirnuju cevnicu.
The change of the original version's "nad grobnicej" (1.59) to "na grobnicu" is a minor one, whereas "lira" (and "mež") are omitted altogether, the poet apparently having decided that they are superfluous, and that it is necessary to give only one symbol of closeness to the "soil" and one symbol representing the "artist". The spaces left by these omissions provide an opportunity to insert the words "mirnyj", and "mirnuju", which, together with line sixty's "moj" and line fifty-nine's "vmesto", create a powerful echo of line fifty-nine's "mramor" - thereby highlighting the key oppositional words of this couplet, "mramor" and "mirnyj".

[43]Gofman, op.cit., pp.45-46.

13 No vy, sud'binu ispytavšie,
14 Tščetu utex, pečali vlast';
15 Vy, znan'e bytija prinjavšie
16 Sebe na tjagostnuju čast'!

17 Gonite proč' ix roj prel'stitel'nyj!
18 Tak! doživajte žizn' v tiši
19 I beregite xlad spasitel'nyj
20 Svoej bezdejstvennoj duši.

21 Svoim besčuvstviem blaženne,
22 Kak trupy mertvyx iz grobov,
23 Volxva slovami probuždenne,
24 Vstajut so skreženom zubov,--

25 Tak vy, sogrev v duše želanija,
26 Bezumno vdavšis' v ix obman,
27 Prosnetes' tol'ko dlja stradanija,
28 Dlja boli tjažkoj prežnix ran.

An alliterative cluster begins the poem:

Dalo dve doli Providen'e...

where the repetition of the phoneme (d) cements semantically Providence's doling out two fates. It is noteworthy that in the original text "Providen'e" is capitalized, so its personification (by "giving" fates) is emphasized.

By informing one of the choice of two fates which Providence has offered to the human intellect, he places four opposing concepts in juxtaposition: two in line three versus two in line four - a forceful opening to his theme:

Ili nadeždu i volnenie

Il' beznadežnost' i pokoj.

The choice is between hope with turmoil and hopelessness with peace. The person who is "bodr dušoju, bodr umom"[44] (l.6, the repetition underlining "bodrost'") is given to believe in "nadežda obol'ščajuščaja". This kind of person is only acquainted with mocking Fate by means of variously prophesying rumour. Like Providence, fate is personified as "Sud'ba nasmešlivaja", a formulation suggestive of a "pagan" outlook.

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[44]In the revised version (pp.91-92), published according to an 1835 revision, the second stanza of line two reads:

Kto bodr neopytnym umom.

The replacement of "bodr dušoj" by "neopytnyj" produces an even more caustic criticism of a belief in hope through its suggestion that someone who believes in it must owe this belief to an inexperienced mind.

The whole of the third stanza is a direct address to "junoši kipjaščie", whom the poet exhorts:

Letite: kryl'ja vam dany!

The imagery of flight and wings is metaphorical: these excited youths can fly by means of their plans and dreams. Interestingly, three out of the four lines in this stanza are concluded with an exclamation mark. A sense of excitement is thereby rendered, which seems to harmonise with the state of mind ascribed to fiery youths:

Nadejtes', junoši kipjaščie!
Letite: kryl'ja vam dany!
Dlja vas - i zamysly blestjaščie,
I serdca plamennye sny!

The imagery of the adjectives employed to describe the plans and dreams of these youths is noteworthy: their plans are "blestjaščie", their dreams "plamennye", so a heightening effect is achieved by means of the increased intensity of "plamennye" compared to "blestjaščie" - "flaming" being an extreme form of "shining".

In the fourth stanza, and in the beginning of the fifth, the poet again directly addresses those who are more aware than the "junoši kipjaščie" of how hard life is:

No vy, sud'binu ispytavšie,
Tščetu utex, pečali vlast';
Vy, znan'e bytija prinjavšie
Sebe na tjagostnuju čast'!

Gonite proč' ix roj prel'stitel'nyj!

Those who have already experienced fate (here, clearly a bitter fate in keeping with the folkish "gor'kaja sud'bina"), those who, unlike flaming youths, know the futility of solace and the power of sorrow and have accepted existence as being onerous, are told by the poet to chase away the "seductive swarm" of shining plans and flaming dreams. He implies that they should realise by now, through experience, that hopelessness and peace are preferable to "futile" hopes, which bring with them turmoil, and eventually disillusionment and pain. It is to be noted that lines one and three of the fourth stanza are marked by syntactic parallelism via the past active participles, "ispytavšie" and "prinjavšie" - which

supports a correspondence between "sud'bina" and "znan'e bytija". Fate and existence are, it is thus implied, both hopelessly gloomy. This is typical of Baratynskij's overall outlook on existence.

The fifth stanza is basically one long command:

Gonite proč' ix roj prel'stitel'nyj!
Tak! doživajte žizn' v tiši
I beregite xlad spasitel'nyj
Svoej bezdejstvennoj duši.

Those who are well-experienced in life's trials are exhorted to live out life in quiet, guarding the saving coldness of an inert soul. For "coldness", the poetic Church Slavonicism, "xlad", is employed to intensify the elevated tone. The exclamation mark of "tak!" emphasizes the poet's disavowal of the philosophy of hope and turmoil in favour of that of hopelessness and peace - and, notably, it disturbs the regularity of this stanza's iambic meter, for the force with which "tak"! is articulated ensures that this line commences with a stressed, rather than an unstressed, syllable. And the "bezdejstvennyj" of line four is underlined by the fact that its final two syllables form a pyrrhic foot. The fact that "svoej" has a relatively weak stress likewise harmonises with the "low-key" aspect of this line, which is in keeping with the idea of "inactivity" and quiet.

A grotesque picture is painted in the sixth stanza of the fate of those who do not adopt hopelessness, peace and passivity. They rise:

Kak trupy mertvyx iz grobov,
Volxva slovami probuždennye...

- a horrifying simile - whereas, before their awakening, they are "blaženne", in a state of serene insensibility. The alliteration of "besčuvstviem blaženne" underlines the serene continuity of such a state. Interestingly, the metric pattern of this stanza and that of the third are identical - which may serve to reinforce its connection with those who belong to the "hopeful", active category.

The seventh and final stanza is yet another direct address : those whom, like corpses, a sorcerer has awakened to reality, are given the melancholy information that they, having let themselves fall into the trap of "warming desires in their soul", will awake only to suffer - just as reawakened corpses would awake

Dlja boli novoj prežnix ran.

The point appears to be that it is most necessary to avoid the "deception" of desires. If one submits to desires, one is asking for pain and disenchantment, a cruel awakening. Hopelessness and passivity go with peace and a certain contentment; hope and desires go with turmoil, disillusionment and pain. The former option is the one to be chosen. As Benjamin Dees comments, "Dve doli" "expands a peculiarly personal preoccupation into an all-embracing framework of universality."[45]

"Beznadežnost'",[46] an 1823 eight-line poem in iambic hexameter (with the exception of a tetrameter in the eighth line) is, as Kjetsaa points out,[47] closely related to "Dve doli" in its theme.

Beznadežnost'

1 Želan'e sčastija v menja vdoxnuli bogi.
2 Ja treboval ego ot neba i zemli,
3 I vsled za prizrakom, manjaščim izdali,
4 Ne vedaja kuda, prošel ja poldorogi.
5 Dovol'no! Ja ustal, i put' okončen moj.
6 Sčastlivyj otdyxom, na sčastie poxožim,
7 Stoju, zadumčivyj, nad žiznennoj stezej, --
8 I skromno klanjajus' proxožim.

The theme of "Beznadežnost'." is the impossibility of finding happiness through going in quest of it: it can only be found in passivity and rest. Baratynskij begins the poem by informing his reader that the gods instilled in him the desire for happiness. This plural, "bogi" imparts a classical, "pagan" element which is quite typical of Baratynskij's verse. This instilling of the desire for happiness can be related to the warning in "Dve doli" that desires of any kind will lead to chagrin. In the second line, we see the juxtaposition of "opposites", Heaven and earth:

Ja treboval ego ot neba i zemli...

The poet has apparently sought happiness both by spiritual and by temporal means. A powerful metaphor is employed in the third line, to represent happiness: the poet, not knowing where he is going, has travelled "halfway through life" ("poldorogi"),

...vsled za prizrakom, manjaščim izdali...

Happiness is depicted as being a mere spectre - something which is very alluring, but

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[45]B. Dees, E.A. Baratynskij (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972), p.51.
[46]Gofman, op.cit., p.46.
[47]Kjetsaa, op.cit., p.322.

which has no real substance. Line four ends with a full stop and marks the end of the search:

Ne vedaja kuda, prošel ja poldorogi."[48]

The impression of finality is reinforced by the exclamation mark after "dovol'no" in line five, and by the period at the end of that line:

Dovol'no! Ja ustal, i put' okončen moj.[49]

Like "poldorogi", "put'" is another symbolic metaphor which represents life - the "path of life." Paradoxically, the poet finds, when he rests from his long quest for happiness, that, after all, it is in rest that something like happiness is to be found:

Sčastlivyj otdyxom, na sčast'e poxožim.

The sound similarities between the two halves of the lines ("sčastlivyj otdyxom" / "sčast'e poxožim") underscore the paradox that one gets closer to happiness through inertia than through the active seeking which characterised the first half of the poem. Two pauses, dictated by two commas, intensify the stasis in line seven, where the poet stands pensively over "life's path" (the lofty "stezja"):

Stoju, zadumčivyj, nad žiznennoj stezej...[50]

"Žiznennaja stezja" is a metaphor which harmonises with those which have already been employed with respect to life, and the poem's conclusion also suits that metaphor:

I skromno klanjajus' proxožim.

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[48]In the revised version, (p.93), published according to an 1827 revision, line four reads:

Žizn' peresel do poldorogi.

Here, the poet chooses not to say explicitly that he does not know whither he was going on life's journey. Also noteworthy is the fact that this version is in iambic tetrameter, as is the last line in both versions. The original version of this line is, of course, in iambic hexameter. Such a revision renders greater symmetry of form to the poem as a whole, for we now have three lines in iambic hexameter, one in iambic tetrameter, three more in iambic hexameter, then one in iambic tetrameter: a 3:1:3:1 pattern, rather than an uneven 4:3:1 pattern. Furthermore, the importance of the poet's having reached a halfway point in life is highlighted metrically.

[49]In the revised version, line five reads:

No prixotjam sud'by ja bole ne služu...

This version is more expressive and colourful, alluding as it does to the "caprices" of fate personified, which the poet has decided to cease serving. An additional point of interest is that "sud'by" and "služu" create an alliterative effect with "sčastlivyj" and "sčastie" of line six.

[50]In the revised version, this line reads:

Otnyne s rubeža na poprišče gljažu ...

This version gives greater emphasis to the eventual difference between the protagonist, who has reached the end of life's path, and those who are still following that path, via the use of the term "s rubeža"; for a boundary, in fact, now delineates the poet's position as separate from that of others. The elevated lexical base given to the original line by "stezja" is preserved here by the bookish "otnyne" and lofty "poprišče".

The exceptional iambic tetrameter, an unpretentious form, befits the sentiment of humility contained in this line. This humility is the result of having spent life in a futile quest, at the end of which some wisdom has been acquired. A state of "hopelessness" has been reached - for "life's traveller" realises that the relief which he feels at the end of his journey is closer to happiness than any other feeling ever could be. And the stage at which he feels thus, is the stage at which he has become passive and without hope. The resolution of "Beznadežnost'" thus corresponds closely to that of "Dve doli" : hopelessness and peače are, indeed, the poet appears to be convinced, preferable to hope and turmoil.

An exception to the foregoing is "Istina" (1823)[51] - an ode which consists of thirteen four-line stanzas in a combination of iambic pentameter (the odd lines) and iambic trimeter (the even). The rhyme-scheme is ABAB, as is normal in Baratynskij's four-line stanza:

Istina

(Oda)

1 O sčastii s mladenčestva toskuja,
2 Vse sčast'em beden ja;
3 Kogda-ž i gde i v čem ego najdu ja,
4 O sud'i bytija!

5 Mladye sny ot serdca otleteli;
6 Ne uznaju ja svet!
7 Nadežd moix lišen ja prežnej celi,
8 A novoj celi net.

9 Bezumen ty i vse tvoi želan'ja!
10 Mne tajnyj golos rek, --
11 I lučšie mečty moej sozdan'ja
12 Otvergnul ja navek!

13 No dlja čego duši razuveren'e
14 Sveršilos' ne vpolne?
15 Začem že v nej slepoe sožalen'e
16 Živet o starine?

17 Tak nekogda obdumyval s roptan'em
18 Ja tjažkij žrebij moj;
19 Vdrug Istinu (to ne bylo mečtan'em)
20 Uzrel pered soboj.

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[51]Gofman, op.cit.,pp.52-53.

21 "Svetil'nik moj ukažet put' ko sčast'ju",
22 Veščala -- "zaxoču,
23 I strastnogo -- otradnomu besstrast'ju
24 Tebja ja nauču.

25 Puskaj so mnoj ty serdca žar pogubiš';
26 Puskaj, uznav ljudej,
27 Ty, možet byt', ispugannyj, razljubis'
28 I bližnix i druzej.

29 Ja bytija vse prelesti razrušu,
30 No um nastavlju tvoj;
31 Ja obol'ju surovym xladom dušu,
32 No dam duše pokoj".

33 Ja trepetal, slovam ee vnimaja,
34 I gorestno v otvet
35 Promolvil ej: o gost' ja nezemnaja!
36 Pečalen tvoj privet!

37 Svetil'nik tvoj -- svetil'nik pogrebal'nyj
38 Poslednix blag moix;
39 Tvoj mir, uvy! mogily mir pečal'nyj
40 I strasen dlja živyx!

41 Pokin' menja, v tvoej nauke strogoj
42 Ja sčast'ja ne najdu;
43 Pokin' menja; koj-kak moej dorogoj
44 Odin ja pobredu.

45 Prosti!.. il' net: kogda moe svetilo
46 Vo zvezdnoj vyšine
47 Načnet blednet', i vse, čto serdcu milo,
48 Zabyt' pridetsja mne...

49 Javis' togda, raskroj togda mne oči,
50 Moj razum prosveti,
51 Čtob, žizn' prezrev, ja mog v obitel' noči
52 Bezropotno sojti.

The ode opens with a complaint by the poet that, even 'though he has craved for happiness since his youth, he has never had it, and he demands rhetorically of the "judges of existence" ("sud'i bytija") when and where and in what he will find it (ll.3-4):

Kogda - ž i gde i v čem ego najdu ja,

O sud'i bytija![52]

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[52]In the revised version (pp.97-98), published according to N. L. Baratynskaja's copy, IRLI, no.21733, lines three and four of the first stanza read:

Ili vovek ego ne obretu ja
V pustyne bytija?

This version depicts existence more negatively than the original: existence is empty - a

A metaphor of young dreams flying from the heart commences the following stanza:

Mladye sny ot serdca otleteli...

He is obviously disillusioned by now, as he admits in lines six to eight:

Ne uznaju ja svet!

Nadežd moix lišen ja prežnej celi,

A novoj celi net...

The third stanza reveals what prompted the poet's disowning of his desires: a "tajnyj golos rek".[53] "Rek" is a high-style Church Slavonicism (meaning "spoke") which enhances the solemnity of the secret voice's pronouncement:

Bezumen ty i vse tvoi želan'ja!

This "tajnyj golos" was obviously in his own head - one side of the personality belittling another aspect. His best dreams, he then spurned "navek!"[54] The exclamation mark underscores the emotional intensity of the poet's reaction. However, in the fourth stanza, which consists of two two-line questions, we learn that this disillusionment of the soul was not absolute, and that a "slepoe sožalen'e/ Živet o starine" - so that the poet is caught in a quandary between "nadežda" and "beznadežnost'", between "volnenie" and "pokoj". As the poet ponders his "tjažkij žrebij",[55] truth personified appears before him. He feels obliged to assure us, hardly convincingly, that "to ne bylo mečtan'em".

It is in the sixth, seventh and eighth stanzas that this poem's connection with those previously analysed is most apparent. The sixth stanza employs the metaphor of Truth's lamp showing the "put' ko sčast'ju" which involves the conversion of a passionate nature to comforting dispassion. In this stanza and in the following two, we hear Truth's voice. In the seventh stanza, she urges the poet to kill the heat of his heart - and she hopes that knowledge about people will frighten him to such an extent that he will cease to love even

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[52](cont'd)"desert".
[53]In the revised version, line ten reads:
Mne pervyj opyt rek...
thereby providing a basis for his pessimism.
[54]In the revised version, line twelve reads:
Otvergnul ja navek.
The replacement of the exclamation mark by a period is consonant with the poet's loss of enthusiasm for the constructs of his imagination.
[55]In the revised version, line eighteen reads:
Ja dol'nij žrebij svoj...
The poetic term "dol'nij" gives potentially milder overtones to this line than "tjažkij", which underlines the onerousness of the poet's burden. "Dol'nij" bears a dual semantic load: it suggests both the "valley of sorrows" and "fated". The line's euphony is thus also improved.

those close to him. In the eighth stanza, she promises that her destruction of life's charms and her chilling of the soul shall be compensated for by edification of the mind and peace of the soul. The poet quakes at Truth's message, and exclaims in grief (ninth stanza, ll.35-36): "...o gost'ja nezemnaja! / Pečalen tvoj privet!"[56] - the two successive exclamation marks augmenting the emotive tenor. As we shall see, the tenth stanza is in total contrast to that of other poems such as "Smert'", where death can be viewed positively:

Svetil'nik tvoj - svetil'nik pogreval'nyj
Poslednix blag moix;
Tvoj mir, uvy! mogily mir pečal'nyj
I strašen dlja živyx!"[57]

Truth, he realises, brings with it a death-like state, and, whereas in the previously examined poems he welcomed such a condition of passivity, peace and insensibility, here he fears it. One notes that he converts Truth's "svetil'nik" into his own funeral lamp - indicating a sceptical view of her "benevolence". He beseeches her, in the next stanza, to leave him, and the contrast between this and the other poems in this chapter is reinforced by his assertion in stanza eleven, (ll.41-42): "...v tvoej nauke strogoj[58] / Ja sčast'ja ne najdu..." It is paradoxical that Baratynskij himself has promoted, in other poems, just such a solution to the problem of attaining contentment, yet insists, here, that this is not the solution for him. It appears, therefore, that he has not yet arrived at a consistent point of view regarding this question. Interestingly, he employs the colloquial "koj-kak moej dorogoj" (l.43), which produces an impression of incongruity in a poem in which the language is otherwise so dignified and solemn. It may imply a shade of flippancy and a

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[56]In the revised version, lines thirty-five and thirty- six read:
Promolvil ej: "O gost' ja rokovaja!
Pečalen tvoj privet.
Less "otherworldly", "rokovaja" renders a more fateful overtone to the stanza, which is slightly subdued by the replacement of line thirty-six's exclamation mark by a period.

[57]In the revised version, the tenth stanza reads:
Svetil'nik tvoj - svetil'nik pogreval'nyj
Vsex radostej zemnyx!
Tvoj mir, uvy! mogily mir pečal'nyj
I strašen dlja živyx.
Line thirty-eight is, here, rendered more universal and forceful via the replacement of "poslednix blag moix" by "vsex radostej zemnyx".

[58]In the revised Soviet version, line forty-one reads:
Net, ja ne tvoj!...
which emphasizes his renunciation of Truth and her morbidity - at least at this stage.

touch of impertinence in his attitude towards Truth, or merely indicate a lack of formality in their relationship.

In the penultimate stanza, he begins to say farewell - then thinks again and decides that it is not quite goodbye. This stanza concludes with ellipsis, a heightened pause which is aimed at focusing on (ll.47-48): "... vse, čto serdcu milo,/ zabyt' pridetsja mne..." [59] However, the echo of "kogda" (twelfth stanza, l.45) by "togda" (thirteenth stanza, l.49) indicates the continuity between the two. Truth is asked to come again:

...kogda moe svetilo
Vo zvezdnoj vyšine
Načnet blednet', i vse, čto serdcu milo,
Zabyt' pridetsja mne...

Javis' togda, raskroj togda mne oči,[60]
Moj razum prosveti.
Čtob, žizn' prezrev, ja mog v obitel' noči
Bezropotno sojti.

Thus, the moral of "Istina" is clear: passivity, coldness and insensibility are opposed to life: they are only acceptable when one is descending "v obitel' noči" - that is, passing into the state of death itself. And, even then, they can only be accepted without protest if one has experienced life fully, with all its "nadeždy", "volnenie" and sufferings. Baratynskij appears to be saying that to find happiness in life is not really what counts. What matters, rather, is to encounter the entire gamut of experiences which life has to offer so as ultimately to be "fulfilled" enough not to feel deprived when death takes one away.[61] This message, obviously, differs starkly from those of "Dve doli" (1823) and "Beznadežnost" (1823), so it is intriguing that it was, in fact, written in the same year - and, one would have thought, at roughly the same stage of intellectual development.

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[59] In the revised version, line forty-eight reads:
Zabyt' pridetsja mne,
It is noteworthy that the three dots at the end of the line have been replaced by a comma, thereby merging the two stanzas closely.

[60] In the revised version, line forty-nine reads:
Javis' togda! raskroj togda mne oči...
The replacement of the comma after "togda" by an exclamation mark adds dramatic emphasis to this line.

[61] A poem which combines the points of view of the aforementioned poems is "Na Smert' Gete" (1832).

"Smert'"(1828)[62] consists of ten four-line stanzas in iambic tetrameter with an ABAB rhyme-scheme. In this poem, the positive aspects of death and passivity, rather than the negative, are concentrated upon.

Smert'

1 O smert'! tvoe imenovan'e
2 Nam v suevernuju bojazn':
3 Ty v našej mysli t'my sozdan'e,
4 Paden'em vyzvannaja kazn'!

5 Neponimaemaja svetom,
6 Risueš'sja v ego glazax
7 Ty otvratitel'nym skeletom
8 S kosoj urodlivoj v rukax.

9 Ty doč' verxovnogo Êfira,
10 Ty svetozarnaja krasa:
11 V ruke tvoej oliva mira,
12 A ne gubjaščaja kosa.

13 Kogda vozniknul mir cvetuščij
14 Iz ravnoves'ja dikix sil,
15 V tvoe xranen'e Vsemoguščij
16 Ego ustrojstvo poručil.

17 I ty letaeš' nad sozdan'em,
18 Zabven'e bed vezde lija
19 I proxlaždajuščim dyxan'em
20 Smirjaja bujstvo bytija.

21 Ty Fivskix brat'ev primirila,
22 Ty v neumerennoj krovi
23 Bezumnoj Fedry pogasila
24 Ogon' mučitel'noj ljubvi...

25 Ty predstaeš', svjataja deva!
26 I s ostyvajuščix lanit
27 Begut mgnovenno pjatna gneva,
28 Žar ljubostrastija bežit.

29 I kraski žizni bespokojnoj,
30 S ix nevozderžnoj pestrotoj,
31 Vdrug zamenjajutsja pristojnoj,
32 Odnoobraznoj beliznoj.

33 Družitsja krotkoju toboju
34 Ljudej nedružnaja sud'ba:
35 Laskaeš' toju že rukoju

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[62]Gofman, op.cit., pp.107-108.

36 Ty vlastelina i raba.

37 Nedoumen'e, prinuždden'e,
38 Uslov'e smutnyx našix dnej:
39 Ty vsex zagadok razrešen'e,
40 Ty razrešen'e vsex cepej.

As is characteristic of Baratynskij, the very first lines contain a personal address directed at something which is essentially abstract:

O smert'! tvoe imenovan'e

Nam v suevernuju bojazn'...

The exclamation mark and attendant pause following "O smert'!" is consonant with the intense reaction, presumably of horror or "superstitious fear", as the poet puts it, which people are prone to experience in confronting death. In lines three and four, the apt images of "t'my sozdan'e" and "kazn'" are used to describe the mind's view of death:

Ty v našej mysli t'my sozdan'e,

Paden'em vyzvannaja kazn'![63]

One notes that another exclamation mark is situated at the end of the first stanza - thereby reinforcing the stanza's atmosphere of horror and fear.

The second stanza shows the conventional worldly image of death, as an "otvratitel'nyj skelet/ S kosoj urodlivoj v rukax,"[64] to be misguided.. Death is, on the contrary, as we are informed in the third stanza, "doč' verxovnogo Èfira" - "Ether" being the classical Greek term for "air" - and she is a "svetozarnaja krasa"[65] - a fanciful, attractive image. "Doč'" is a step in the personification process of this abstract phenomenon. And we see an interesting opposition, in two consecutive verses (ll.11-12), of "oliva mira" and "gubjaščaja kosa":

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[63]In the revised version, (pp.134-135), published according to an 1829 revision, the first stanza reads:

Smert' dščer'ju t'my ne nazovu ja
I, rabolepnoju mečtoj
Grobovyj ostov ej daruja,
Ne opolču ee kosoj.

The revision makes it clear from the very outset that the poet does not share the conventional view of death.

[64]This stanza is omitted from the revised version, although, as the preceding footnote indicates, elements of it are found in the revision.

[65] The second stanza of the revised version corresponds to the third stanza of the original version, to which it is almost identical, apart from slight revisions in lines five and six:

O doč' verxovnogo èfira!
O svetozarnaja krasa!

These lines are intensified emotionally by means of the repetition of "O" and by the exclamation marks.

V ruke tvoej oliva mira,

A ne gubjaščaja kosa.

A vividly romantic description of the origin of the world begins the fourth stanza:

Kogda vozniknul mir cvetuščij

Iz raznoves'ja dikix sil...

We learn that, at that time, God entrusted "ego ustrojstvo" to death's keeping.

The whole of the fifth stanza is an image of the soothing activities of death personified:

I ty letaeš' nad sozdan'em,

Zabven'e bed vezde lija

I proxlaždajuščim dyxan'em[66]

Smirjaja bujstvo bytija.

Death really is like a sweet, comforting maiden whose refreshing breath pacifies life's tumult. Her tranquillizing role is continued in the sixth stanza, where it is related that she reconciled the Thebeian brothers and:

Bezumnoj Fedry pogasila

Ogon' mučitel'noj ljubvi... [67]

Baratynskij's preference for insensibility and passivity over passions and agitation is displayed clearly in this stanza, where death is cited as having been the only means of reconciling two "irreconcilable" brothers; and where passionate blood is depicted as intemperate, "neumerennaja", and love as tormenting, "mučitel'naja" - two decidedly

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[66]The fourth stanza of the revised version corresponds to the fifth stanza of the original version. Alterations exist in lines thirteen to fifteen:

I ty letaeš' nad tvoren'em,
Soglas'e prjam ego lija,
I v nem proxladnym dunoven'em...

The most important change here is the replacement of "zabven'e" with "soglas'e", which heightens death's harmonizing function.

[67]The fifth stanza of the revised version corresponds to the sixth stanza of the original version. It is, however, very different:

Ty ukroščaeš' vosstajuščij
V bezumnoj sile uragan,
Ty, na brega svoi beguščij
Vspjat' vozvraščaeš' okean.

Here, the major importance of the change is that the reference is to the real world rather than to mythology. This type of reference continues in an additional stanza inserted into the revised version, and following immediately after stanza six:

Daeš' predely ty rasten'ju,
Čtob ne pokryl gigantskij les
Zemli gubitel'noju ten'ju,
Zlak ne vosstal by do nebes.

pejorative adjectives.

The following stanza, the seventh, describes death's tranquillizing effects when it calls on someone:

Ty predstaeš', svjataja deva!
I s ostyvajuščix lanit
Begut mgnovenno pjatna gneva,[68]
Žar ljubostrastija bežit.

"Begut" in line twenty-seven is echoed by "bežit" in line twenty-eight, thereby emphasizing that such passions do not merely leave when death appears, but flee. A further step in death's personification is the appellation "svjataja deva", which is a strong idealisation of this pacifying force, and brings to mind the "Holy Virgin" of Christianity. The exclamation mark which follows "svjataja deva" could suggest the shock which is generally inspired by her appearance, but it more plausibly reflects the poet's own ecstatic feelings for death, whose powers he finds so beneficent.

In the eighth stanza, life's riotous lack of uniformity is described metaphorically by "kraski" and "pestrota". Under death's influence, this motley of colours suddenly becomes a "...pristojnaja, odnoobraznaja belizna"[69] (ll.31-32). Death reduces everything to one "colour", to total uniformity, a stream of thought which is pursued in the ninth stanza, where we are told that people's disharmonious lots in life are made compatible by death. A play exists on the words "družit'sja" and "nedružnaja", which share similar roots:

Družitsja krotkoju toboju[70]
Ljudej nedružnaja sud'ba...

And we have a metaphor to illustrate "death the leveller". She caresses both ruler and slave with the same hand:

Laskaeš' toju že rukoju

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[68]In the revised version, lines twenty-five, twenty-six and twenty-seven are modified and tie death's appearance to man from the very outset:
A čelovek! Svjataja deva!
Pered toboj s ego lanit
Mgnovenno sxodjat pjatna gneva...

[69] This stanza is omitted from the revised version.

[70]In the revised version, line twenty-nine (which corresponds to line thirty-three in the original version) reads:
Družitsja pravednoj toboju...
"Pravednyj" expresses much more appropriately than "krotkij" the idea of "death the just leveller", who treats both ruler and slave alike.

Ty vlastelina i raba.

In the tenth and final stanza, Baratynskij refers to some of the "evils" of his day, "nedoumen'e" and "prinuždden'e", and he views death as being the panacea for all such ills:

Ty vsex zagadok razrešen'e,

Ty razrešen'e vsex cepej.

Interestingly, three out of the four words of line three, "ty", "vsex" and "razrešen'e", are repeated in line four, thereby emphasizing that death is a force which possesses the power to deliver one from the evils of all that is unclear and all that fetters.

"Smert'" is fundamentally an exploitation of the paradox between grotesque, stereotypically negative aspects of death and certain attractive, positive aspects, including the promise of freedom which it offers to men. The poet takes a firm stand in this poem on the side of death's virtues, not its horrors, even going so far as to propose it as a solution to mankind's problems.

As can be seen, of the five poems which have been examined in this chapter, "Rodina (Sel'skaja èlegija)" (1823), "Dve doli" (1823), "Beznadežnost'" (1823) and "Smert'" (1828) come to a consensus that passivity and peace are man's best hopes if he seeks contentment, while activity and turmoil lead to trouble, disorder and pain. "Istina" (1828) alone veers to the side of activity and dynamism, for, although its protagonist appreciates the virtues of peace, he fears such a state and follows his natural instinct to live to the full. The incongruity between total peace and life makes it highly significant that, in the majority of the poems included in this study, Baratynskij nevertheless advocates peace, passivity and even death as the ideal for all beings. We can already begin to perceive to what depths of gloom his world-view descends.

III. Life and Death

The three poems to be discussed in this chapter, "Čerep" (1824), "Poslednjaja smert'" (1827) and "Smert' (Podražanie A. Šen'e)" (1828) share a common feature: that of death-life opposition. In each of these poems, the nature of death and that of life are highlighted through juxtaposition, so that the unique properties of each are brought into stark relief.

The polarised nature of life and death is expressed particularly distinctly in "Čerep"(1824)[71], a poem composed of eight, four-line iambic pentametric stanzas, with an ABAB rhyme-scheme.

Čerep

1 Usopšij brat, kto son tvoj vozmutil?
2 Kto prenebreg svjatyneju mogil'noj?
3 V razrytyj dom k tebe ja nisxodil,
4 Ja v ruki bral tvoj čerep želtyj, pyl'nyj!

5 Ešče nosil volos ostatki on;
6 Ja zrel na nem xod postepennyj tlen'ja.
7 Užasnyj vid! Kak sil'no poražen
8 Im mysljaščij naslednik razrušen'ja!

9 So mnoj tolpa bezumcev molodyx
10 Rebjačeski vkrug jamy xoxotala.--
11 Kogda-b togda, kogda-b v rukaz moix
12 Glava tvoja vnezapno proveščala!

13 Kogda-b ona cvetuščim, pylkim nam
14 I každyj čas grozimym smertnym časom
15 Vse istiny, izvestnye grobam,
16 Proiznesla svoim besstrastnym glasom!

17 Čto govorju? Stokratno blag zakon,
18 Molčan'em ej usta zapečatlevšij!
19 Obyčaj prav, usopšix važnyj son
20 Nam počitat' izdavna povelevšij.

21 Grob voprošat' derzaet čelovek --
22 O suetnyj, bezumnyj izyskatel'!
23 "Živi živoj, tlej mertvyj!" vot čto rek
24 Vsego jasnej tainstvennyj Sozdatel'.

25 Nam nadobny i strasti, i mečty,
26 V nix bytija uslovie i pišča:
27 Ne podčiniš' odnim zakonam ty

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[71]Gofman, op.cit., pp.70-71.

28 I sveta šum, i tišinu kladbišča!

29 Ego sud'bam pokorno grob molčit.
30 Začem že nas nesbyvšeesja mučit?
31 Pust' radosti živuščim žizn' darit,
32 A smert' sama ix umeret' naučit.

The opening stanza of this poem presents the reader with the incongruous image - whether a concrete memory or a product of the imagination - of a young man,"the poet", holding the skull of an "usopšij brat" in his hand. The Hamletian overtones of this scene were noted by Puškin, who, in an 1827 epistle to Del'vig, dubbed Baratynskij "Gamlet-Baratynskij".[72] We see, here, youth and vitality in direct juxtaposition with the sterility of death. Yet the poet attempts to draw the members of what appears to be an ill-matched couple into closer kinship. This effect is striven for by means of the protagonist's greeting of the skull as a deceased "brat". The reader is thus encouraged to view the young poet and this skull, a symbol of death, as being less estranged than would first appear to be the case; for, indeed, this youth shall, one day in the future, himself be a mere skeleton, the skull of which another may hold in his hand. In this sense - that of sharing a common destiny - these two, skull and young man, are, indeed, "brothers". The entire first stanza is addressed to the skull,.and lines one and two are, in fact, questions which, along with other features just mentioned, enhance the "personification", or quasi-vivification, of the skull. In addition, the questions almost seem to expect a reply - as if the state in which the skull abides is, in fact, as the poet describes it, one of a sleep which has been disturbed.

Whereas the first stanza is in the form of a direct address, the second is somewhat detached as it presents a description of the skull. It is, as the poet describes it, an "užasnyj vid!", which bears the remains of hair and on which can be seen the "xod postepennyj tlen'ja". The fact that it retains features, such as hair, which are shared by the poet himself, only renders more horrific the thought that someone who once was alive and not very different from this young man is now in such a state of decay. In line eight, however, such figurative specificity progresses to become, as N.R. Mazepa observes, "abstragirovannyj počti do otvlečennoj filosofskoj kategorii"[73], for the reaction of the

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[72]A.S. Puškin, op.cit., vol.3, p.30.
[73]N.R. Mazepa, E.A. Baratynskij (Estetičeskie i Literaturno-Kritičeskie Vzgljady) (Kiev: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Ukrainskoj S.S.R., 1960), p.75.

young man, who is so "sil'no poražen", is universalized as that of a unit of an entire species whose lot is destruction: "mysljaščij naslednik razrušen'ja!"

The "peephole" through which we have been viewing this scene is now, in the third stanza, expanded to reveal that the youth is not alone with the skull - for a crowd of "bezumcy molodye" is, in fact, also present : yet the poet dismisses them without delay, for all that we hear of them is that their "tolpa"(l. 10):

Rebjačeski vkrug jamy xoxotala...[74]

The poet wishes to communicate his contempt for such mindless youths, who understand so little of the profounder aspects of life and death, and who are not, unlike the protagonist, inclined towards meditation and philosophizing.

Having passed this brief comment upon his companions, the poet moves from the concrete plane to one of abstract contemplation - in which realm he rests for the remaining stanzas, and, as Dees puts it: "the image of the young man becomes a speculative category".[75] Line eleven begins a "flight of fancy", which continues to the end of the fourth stanza:

Kogda-b togda, kogda-b v rukax moix
Glava tvoja vnezapno proveščala!

Kogda-b ona cvetuščim, pylkim nam
I každyj čas grozimym smertnym časom
Vse istiny, izvestnye grobam,
Proiznesla svoim besstrastnym glasom!

The increasingly elevated tone of these lines is underlined by the use of inversion and of Church Slavonicisms, such as "glava", and "glasom", which render a correspondingly

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[74]In the revised version (p. 106), published according to an 1835 revision, the corresponding line reads:

Nad jamoju bezumno xoxotala...

This latter version is somewhat more caustic in tone than the original version: for the statement that the other youths laugh "bezumno" reveals, without doubt, a more contemptuous attitude on the part of the poet than does the allegation that they laugh "rebjačeski". The image of the youths laughing "nad"("over") the pit produces a more striking impression upon the reader than does that of their laughing "vkrug" ("around") the pit - for "nad" provides a clearer picture of a cluster of idiotic faces staring downwards, into the pit, rather than merely being more loosely grouped around its edges.

[75]Dees, op.cit., p.43.

greater stylistic elevation to the poem's lexical base. A particular sense of unity is created via the frequent recurrence of the phoneme [s] and of the case-endings in "m", and by the repetition of "kogda-b". "We" are described as "cvetuščie, pylkie" - a vivid, metaphorical use of these adjectives, which invoke an image so full of vibrant life that the stark contrast between the living and the dead is dramatically highlighted. The repetition of "čas" in "I každyj čas grozimym smertnym časom" underlines the omnipresence of death's menace; and the poet briefly expresses the wish that the skull will begin to speak to this laughing crowd of the grave's truth.

The awe which the poet experiences at the prospect of truth being so revealed is amplified by the use of exclamation marks to close both the third and the fourth stanzas. However, a sense of reconciliation with the wisdom of nature's law descends upon him in the following stanza, when he realizes with gratitude that the skull's mouth ("usta"- a suitably lofty Church Slavonicism for an archaic object) are in fact sealed with silence. This exclamation of relief is suitably punctuated by another exclamation mark. Dees describes the poet, in his praising of the age-old law which respects the silence of the dead, as "hiding behind a rationalization".[76] And the poet indeed appears to be attempting to allay his own fears by reasoning with himself that a dead skull cannot possibly speak again, and that the "važnyj son" of the deceased - a highly euphemistic way of referring to the state of death, and another manifestation of the poet's reluctance to confront death's apparent finality - must be honoured.

From the conclusion of the fifth stanza onwards, the dramatic tension relaxes somewhat, as the poet, having dispensed with concrete details, commences to philosophize:

Grob voprošat' derzaet čelovek
O suetnyj, bezumnyj izyskatel'! -
"Živi živoj, tlej mertvyj! "vot čto rek
Vsego jasnej tainstvennyj Sozdatel'. [77]

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[76]Dees, op.cit., p.44.

[77]In the revised version, the sixth stanza reads:

Živi živoj, spokojno tlej mertvec!
Vsesil'nogo ničtožnoe sozdan'e,
O čelovek! uver'sja nakonec,
Ne dlja tebja ni mudrost', ni vseznan'e!

This version, in contrast with the original, stresses that an ordinary living man cannot have profound wisdom, nor omniscience - and man's helplessness is underlined by the dramatic

These words from the sixth stanza stress man's foolishness in asking questions of the grave, for the dead and the living are strictly segregated by order of the Creator - one cannot communicate with the other.

The concept that the living must live and the dead must rot is pursued in the final two stanzas. The poet places himself on the same level as all men in the first line of stanza seven, where he tells us :

Nam nadobny i strasti, i mečty...

This stanza is intended to highlight living man's need of passions and dreams, which are the condition and food of existence. The world's noise and the cemetery's quiet are not, we are told, subject to the same laws.

The first two lines of the final stanza read as follows:

Ego sud'bam pokorno grob molčit.
Začem že nas nesbyvšeesja mučit?[78]

These lines stress the role of the grave - that is, of the dead. The grave submissively guards its silence, for why should it torment us, who have not yet had an opportunity to become fulfilled? The conclusion reveals a key concept in this poem: that life should give joys to the living, and that death herself will, in time, teach them to die:

Pust' radosti živuščim žizn' darit,
A smert' sama ix umeret' naučit.

The repetition, in line thirty-one, of forms of "žit'" echoes the "živi živoj" of line twenty-three, and marks the predominance of the poem's "life-asserting" aspect over the "death-asserting". Here, "Istina" comes to mind - for in it, too, death is offered the opportunity of helping one to attain it easily, after one has been given the opportunity of living life to the full.

It can be seen, therefore, that, in "Čerep", life and death, both of which are personified (life as giving joys to the living, and death as teaching the living how to die), are depicted as coexisting incongruously on earth. In contrast to other poems by Baratynskij

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[77](cont'd)juxtaposition of "Vsesil'nyj" and "ničtožnoe sozdan'e" in line two. Both versions, however, agree that the living must live and the dead must rot.

[78]In the revised version, the corresponding lines read:

Prirodnyx cuvst mudrec ne zaglušit
I ot grobov otveta ne polučit...

This version stresses the role of the living. A wise man will neither suppress natural feelings for life, nor can he receive answers from the grave.

(such as "Dve doli", "Beznadežnost'", and "Smert"), the life-affirming tendency predominates over the death-affirming tendency. Kjetsaa maintains that such life-affirming conclusions in some of the young Baratynskij's poetry

> "skoree vsego vosprinimajutsja nami, kak popytki izbežat' mučaščix poèta tjaželyx razmyšlenij, a ne kak estestvennoe vyraženie ego mirovozzrenija."[79]

This seems a justifiable comment. The views which are reflected in Baratynskij's poetry may be inconsistent, even amongst poems which are written within the same year. However, given the usual predominance of the death-oriented and attendant aspects, it is difficult to accept that Baratynskij did, in fact, undergo genuine transformations in his basically pessimistic outlook within short periods of time, although one may need to make allowances for some indecisiveness on his part.

The next poem which shall be discussed is "Poslednjaja smert'" (1827).[80]

Poslednjaja smert'

1 Est' bytie, no imenem kakim
2 Ego nazvat'? -- ni son ono, ni bden'e:
3 Mež nix ono, i v čeloveke im
4 S bezumiem graničit razumen'e.
5 On v polnote ponjat'ja svoego,
6 A mezdy tem, kak volny, na nego
7 Odni drugix mjatežnej, svoenravnej
8 Videnija begut so vsex storon;
9 Kak budto by svoej otčizne davnej,
10 Stixijnomu smjaten'ju otdan on.
11 No inogda, mečtoj vosplamenennyj,
12 On vidit svet, drugim neotkrovennyj.

13 Sozdan'e-li boleznennoj mečty,
14 Il' derzkogo uma soobražen'e,
15 Vo glubine polnočnoj temnoty
16 Predstavšee očam moim viden'e? --
17 Ne vedaju; no predo mnoj togda
18 Raskrylisja grjaduščie goda,
19 Sobytija vstavali, razvivalis',
20 Volnujasja podobno oblakam,
21 I polnymi èpoxami javljalis'
22 Ot vremeni do vremeni očam;
23 I nakonec ja videl bez pokrova
24 Poslednjuju sud'bu vsego živogo.

25 Snačala mir javil mne divnyj sad;
26 Vezde iskusstv, obilija primety:
27 Bliz vesi -- ves' i podle grada -- grad;
28 Vezde dvorcy, teatry, vodomety;
29 Vezde narod, i xitryj svoj zakon

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[79]Kjetsaa, op.cit., p.334.
[80]Gofman, op.cit., pp.95-98.

30 Stixii vse priznat' zastavil on.
31 Už on morej mjatežnye pučiny
32 Na ostrovax iskusstvennyx selil,
33 On rassekal nebesnye ravniny
34 Po prixoti im vymyšlennyx kril;
35 Vse na zemle dviženiem dyšalo,
36 Vse na zemle kak budto likovalo.

37 Isčeznuli besplodnye goda:
38 Oratai po vole prizyvali
39 Vetrà, doždi, žary i xolodà,
40 I vernoju storicej vozdavali
41 Posevy im; i xiščnyj zver' isčez,
42 Vo t'me lesov, i v vysote nebes,
43 I v bezdne vod sražennyj čelovekom,
44 I carstvoval povsjudu svetlyj mir.
45 Vot, myslil ja, prel'ščennyj divnym vekom,
46 Vot razuma velikolepnyj pir!
47 Vragam ego i v styd i v poučen'e,
48 Vot do čego dostiglo prosveščen'e!

49 Prošli veka; jasnet' očam moim
50 Videnie drugoe načinalo:
51 Čto čelovek? čto vnov' otkryto im?
52 Ja gordo mnil;-- i čto že mne predstalo?
53 Nastavšuju èpoxu ja s trudom
54 Postignut' mog smutivšimsja umom.
55 Glaza moi ljudej ne uznavali:
56 Privykšie k obil'ju dol'nix blag,
57 Na vse oni spokojnye vzirali,
58 Čto suety rozdalo v ix otcax,
59 Čto mysli ix, čto strasti ix, byvalo,
60 Vlečeniem vsesil'nym uvlekalo.

61 Želanie zemnye pozabyv,
62 Čuždajasja ix grubogo vlečen'ja,
63 Duševnyx snov, vysokix snov prizyv
64 Im zamenil drugie pobuždeń'ja,
65 I v polnoe vladenie svoe
66 Fantazija vzjala ix bytie;
67 I umstvennoj prirode ustupila
68 Telesnaja priroda meždu nix;
69 Ix v Empirej i v Xaos unosila
70 Živaja mysl' na krylijax svoix.
71 No po zemle s trudom oni stupali,
72 I braki ix besplodny prebyvali.

73 Prošli veka, i tut moim očam
74 Javilasja užasnaja kartina:
75 Xodila smert' po suše, po vodam,
76 Sveršalasja živuščego sud'bina.
77 Gde ljudi? gde?... Sokrylisja v grobax.
78 Kak drevnie stolpy na rubežax,
79 Poslednie semejstva istlevali;
80 V razvalinax stojali goroda;
81 Po pažitjam zagloxnuvšim bluždali
82 Bez pastyrej bezumnye stada;
83 S ljud'mi dlja nix isčezlo propitan'e,--

84 Mne slyšalos' ix gladnoe blejan'e.

85 I tišina glubokaja vosled
86 Zadumčivo povsjudu vocarilas',
87 I v dikuju porfiru drevnix let
88 Deržavnaja priroda oblačilas':
89 Veličestven i grusten byl pozor
90 Pustynnyx vod, lesov, dolin i gor.
91 Poprežnemu životvorja prirodu,
92 Na nebosklon svetilo dnja vzošlo;
93 No na zemle ničto ego vosxodu
94 Proiznesti priveta ne moglo...
95 Odin tuman nad nej, sineja, vilsja
96 I žertvoju čistitel'noj dymilsja.

Critics agree that this is one of Baratynskij's most important works. Belinskij, in fact, judged it to be "apofeozoj vsej poèzii g. Baratynskogo".[81] It consists of eight twelve-line stanzas in a solemn and ponderous iambic pentameter which harmonises with its elevated intonation, with rhyme-pattern ABABCCDEDEFF, and a caesura after the fourth syllable.

Kjetsaa comments with regard to the unusual length of the stanzas:

> "Popytki Baratynskogo isprobovat' svoi sily v takoj dlinnoj strofe sleduet oxarakterizovat' neobyčajno smeloj. Daže u Puškina, za isključeniem oneginskoj strofy, my ne naxodim strof, prevyšajuščix desjat' stixov. Dlina strof utverždaet nas vo mnenii, čto pered nami bol'šaja, neokončennaja poèma."[82]

Kjetsaa's argument, however, has a thin foundation: the length of the stanzas alone is hardly proof that "Poslednjaja smert'" is unfinished, for it is an integrated whole in its present form. Furthermore, Baratynskij revised it in 1835 in a way that is similar to his revisions of other "finished" poems. The concern of this study, however, is not with this particular question, but, rather, with the depiction of life and death by Baratynskij in this poem. This depiction differs from, for example, that of "Čerep's", in that, in "Poslednjaja smert'", the poet is concerned with life and death on a vast scale: that is, he speculates regarding the possible future of mankind and of life on earth as a whole. This hypothesised future, he divides into three "epochs": firstly, mankind's "heyday", its most "alive" period; secondly, mankind's degeneration; and, finally, the death not only of all mankind but of all life on earth.

The poem commences with a description of the creative condition: a state of being which is neither sleep nor wakefulness. It is a state bordering on both of these, and one in

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[81]V.G. Belinskij, Sobranie sočinenij v trex tomax (Moskva: Akademija nauk S:S.S.R., 1948), tom II, str. 432.
[82]Kjetsaa, op.cit., p.433.

which

S bezumiem graničit razumen'e.

This is a strange condition, its opposite states incongruously coexisting as juxtaposed by the poet: "son" and "bden'e"; "bezumie" and "razumen'e". The atmosphere is surreal, for, despite the poet's assertion that he is in full control of his senses, he is assailed from all sides by visions like waves - this simile giving a sense of the sea - and these visions are:

Odni drugix mjatežnej, svoenravnej.

The poet is given over to elemental confusion, such as must have existed in his fatherland long ago, and in this creative state of being, enflamed by a dream ("mečtoj vosplamenennyj" - a vividly metaphorical adjective) he sometimes sees a world which is not revealed to others.

Such a special vision, a feature typical of romantic poetry, now appears to the poet in the second stanza as he wonders whether it is the creation of a "boleznennaja mečta" or an idea which comes from a "derzkij um". Whatever the nature of the vision's origin, future years are now revealed to the poet. Events appear, swirling like clouds - the confusion seeming to echo that of the first stanza, - except that clouds now replace the suggested image of the sea, and whole epochs appear from time to time, until:

I nakonec ja videl bez pokrova

Poslednjuju sud'bu vsego živogo.

Swirling abstractions have given way to clarity and substance.

The third stanza describes what a "divnyj sad" the world has become - a description which is reminiscent of the Garden of Eden. The sense of "abundance" and harmony is accentuated in lines twenty-six to thirty by the repetitions of "vezde", and by the description of village standing by village, and city by city, so that the normal city-country opposition does not obtain, and everything is part of a harmonious whole:

Vezde iskusstv, obilija primety:

Bliz vesi - ves' i podle grada - grad;

Vezde dvorcy, teatry, vodomety;

Vezde narod, i xitryj svoj zakon

Stixii vse priznat' zastavil on.

Reason rules this affluent world, for even "morej mjatežnye pučiny" have been settled with

artificial islands, and man-made wings criss-cross the sky. The universality and dynamism of this happy state of affairs is underlined by the repetition of "vse na zemle", and the alliteration of "dviženiem dyšalo" in the stanza's final couplet:

Vse na zemle dviženiem dyšalo,
Vse na zemle kak budto likovalo.

Praise of this utopian world continues in the fourth stanza: we are told that the "tillers of the soil" no longer know infertile years, but that wind, rain, heat and cold can be summoned at will - man being in full control of the elements - and what they sow is reaped a hundredfold (which, of course, brings to mind similar words in the bible). The predatory beast has disappeared:

Vo t'me lesov, i v vysote nebes,
I v bezdne vod sražennyj čelovekom

- an effective juxtaposition of opposites. This "svetlyj mir", which man has conquered by reason and civilisation, charms the poet, who exclaims:

Vot, myslil ja, prel'ščennyj divnym vekom,
Vot razuma velikolepnyj pir!
Vragam ego i v styd i v poučen'e,
Vot do čego dostiglo prosveščen'e!

One is struck by the prevalence of the sound [v] in these four concluding lines of the stanza, both anaphorically and alliteratively. The lines mark the climax of this wonderful triumph of reason, in all its unified perfection. Assisting in the buildup of this climax has been the high concentration of Church Slavonicisms or lofty words in these latter two stanzas: words such as "javil", "divnyj", "grad","likovalo", "oratai", and "pir".

The fifth stanza informs the reader that centuries have passed, and that another vision is beginning to show itself to the poet, who proudly wonders what the next disclosure of man's achievements shall be. However, what is revealed produces a painful impression: people are unrecognisable compared to what they were in the previous vision. They have become surfeited by the "obil'e dol'nix blag", and have lost the dynamism of their forefathers. Those things which agitated their ancestors and which stimulated their thoughts and passions are regarded with total impassivity by this latest breed of humanity. After mankind's flourishing, as related in the preceding two stanzas, begins its

degeneration.

The sixth stanza elaborates: people have forgotten earthly desires, which are too coarse for them; and:

Duševnyx snov, vysokix snov prizyv
Im zamenil drugie pobužden'ja,
I v polnoe vladenie svoe
Fantazija vzjala ix bytie...

An arresting repetition of "sny" is contained in the first of the lines quoted, and this repetition emphasizes the new importance of dreams and fantasy in the lives of members of this future society. To underline fantasy's high status, Baratynskij personifies it by describing it as taking "full possession" of people's existence. Cerebral nature and somatic nature are counterposed in the lines,

I umstvennoj prirode ustupila
Telesnaja priroda meždu nix...

The playoff of these opposite phenomena highlights the conflict which exists between them: they are pitted against one another, and only one of them will conquer. This archly "romantic" escape into fantasy is not the "ideal" we might expect, but, curiously, an indicator of degeneration. In a metaphor which continues her personification, fantasy, described as "živaja mysl'", takes men on her wings into Empyrean (a word from Greek mythology - literally "in fire" - meaning the highest heaven, where the gods live) and into Chaos(the Greek word meaning "space"). This new species of mankind loves to travel on the wings of fantasy, but it finds difficulty in dealing with earthly matters, so its marriages are barren, which augurs the end of the human race.

Stanza seven follows this state of affairs to its natural conclusion, centuries later, where, before the poet's eyes,

Javilasja užasnaja kartina: [83]

In this stanza, we are shown that death, which is personified, now rules the earth in place

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[83]In the revised version (pp.129-132), published according to an 1835 revision, the corresponding line reads:

Otkrylasja užasnaja kartina:

Here, "javilasja" is replaced by "otkrylasja". Whereas the former indicates a simple appearance, the latter appears to suggest that something is being revealed to the poet, that a "discovery" is being made by him - the discovery of this secret of the future, which is the death of all that lives.

of reason:

Xodila smert' po suše, po vodam,

Sveršalasja živuščego sud'bina.

Opposites are again juxtaposed in "po suše, po vodam", which imparts to the reader the totality of death upon the earth, for it is literally everywhere. "Sud'bina" is a word which is normally employed in folk poetry, so that its appearance here is noteworthy. The poet asks twice where people are:

Gde ljudi? gde?... Sokrylisja v grobax...

and a striking image is used to refer to the remaining, decaying families, which are:

Kak drevnie stolpy na rubežax...

The concluding stanza portrays a period following shortly upon that which has just been described. Here, we have a deep silence, "tišina glubokaja", which is personified as reigning pensively:

Zadumčivo povsjudu vocarilas'...[84]

In another personification, Nature is depicted as robing herself ("oblačit'sja" is an ecclesiastical term, as if a priest is robing himself to offer sacrifice) in the "dikaja porfira drevnix let" - an unusual coupling of "dikaja" (savage) with "porfira" (purple)- a striking image, redolent of the wild grandeur of the early days of earth's existence, but creating an ironic effect, since what we see now is an earth tragically bereft of organic life. Purple, indeed, brings to mind not only royal grandeur, but also death - as when leaves turn purple at the end of their life. "Veličestven i grusten" is the sight of the empty waters, woods, valleys and mountains. The "svetilo dnja" (an elevated metaphor for the sun) appears on the horizon, personified as the former "vivifier" of nature, back at the beginning of earth's history. However, nothing is left alive to greet the sunrise, and only a twisting, bluish mist hangs, as if symbolic of death, over the earth:

I žertvoju čistitel'noj dymilsja.

N.R. Mazepa describes the image of the mist as "čuvstvenno konkretnyj, živopisnyj", and

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[84]In the revised version, the corresponding line reads:

Toržestvenno povsjudu vocarilas'...

The adverb "toržestvenno", which replaces "zadumčivo", imparts a distinctly modified semantic overtone - one of dignified solemnity, rather than of simple pensiveness. "Toržestvenno" seems a more appropriate partner for the verb which concludes this line: "vocarilas'". This revision may have resulted in part from a wish to avoid a romantic cliché of the 1820's.

he emphasizes that this image "neset bol'šuju smyslovuju nagruzku, vyzyvaja u čitatelja associaciju s drevnim altarem jazyčnikov."[85] The image of death as a purgative, "čistitel'naja žertva" suggests that earth benefits from the death of all that lives on her - she is being "cleansed".

The grandeur of the final stanza is enhanced by the elevated lexical base therein, viz.: "vocarit'sja ", "deržavnaja","oblačit'sja","veličestven" and "svetilo dnja". These lofty poeticisms ensure that the poem's final note is a solemn, almost sacred one.

The portrayal of the life-death opposition in "Poslednjaja smert'" is an interesting one, unusual, of course, as has been mentioned, in that it actually depicts death on a vast scale, rather than merely abstractly suggesting the death of all men (as, for example, in "Čerep"). Here, death is in stark juxtaposition with flourishing life. Man flourishes while reason has a positive influence and while his "drive" is still there, but once he alienates himself from nature via fantasy, his drive and his natural passions are gone, leaving behind only passivity and apathy - and these lead to death. While one could construably make fantasy alone the "villain of the piece", it seems evident as well that science and reason are unable to ensure man's perpetual well-being. An extension of "Poslednjaja smert's" message is present in a previously quoted line from "Čerep", that:

Nam nadobny i strasti i mečty,
V nix bytija uslovie i pišča.

That is: passions should be tempered by dreams, and vice-versa : if only dreams remain, the poet seems to be saying, man shall die, dreams without passions being suited only to death. The rest of nature, however, is guilty neither of indulgence, nor of over-indulgence in dreams, and it appears highly unjust, therefore, that it should be condemned to the same fate as man. It seems strange, in fact, that such is the case in this poem, for surely the majority of the rest of nature could be expected to survive as well, and even better, without man's interfering presence.

The final poem to be discussed in this chapter is "Smert' (Podražanie A. Šen'e)"(1828),[86] a short poem consisting of one stanza of fourteen lines in iambic hexameter (an unusual iambic meter for Baratynskij), and in Alexandrine rhyming couplets.

Smert'

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[85]Mazepa, op.cit.,, p.78.
[86]Gofman, op.cit., p.102.

(Podražanie A. Šen'e)

1 Pod bureju sudeb, unylyj, často ja,
2 Skučaja tjagostnoj nevolej bytija,
3 Nesti jarmo moe utračivaja silu,
4 Gljažu s otradoju na blizkuju mogilu:
5 Privetstvuju ee, pokoj ee ljublju,
6 I cepi otrjasti ja sam sebja molju.
7 No vskore mnimaja rešimost' pozabyta,
8 I tomnoj slabosti duša moja otkryta.
9 Strašna mogila mne: i bližnie, druz'ja,
10 Moe grjaduščee i molodost' moja
11 I obeščanija v grudi sokrytoj muzy --
12 Vse obol'stitel'no skrepljaet žizni uzy;
13 I daleko iščU, kak žrebij moj ni strog,
14 Ja žit' i bedstvovat' uslužlivyj predlog.

The poem is, in fact, a shortened imitation of the French poet André Chénier's "Élégie XXV". It is in the form of two sentences : the first sentence consists of lines one to six, and the second sentence of lines seven to fourteen. In each of these sentences, a particular attitude towards life and death is demonstrated, but one attitude is incongruous with the other.

The poet commences by asserting that often, when he is depressed "pod bureju sudeb", and tiring of the "tjagostnaja nevolja bytija", and losing the strength to carry his "jarmo", he looks with joy upon the nearby grave, welcoming it, loving its peace, and clearly is tempted by suicide:

I cepi otrjasti ja sam sebja molju.

An interesting collection of metaphors is present in this, the first section of the poem : the poet speaks of "burja sudeb" and "jarmo", and he desires to shake off the "cepi" with which he feels shackled. The lexical base is elevated by the use of words such as "tjagostnaja", "nevolja", "bytie", "jarmo, "otrada" and "molit'". This section is reminiscent of "Smert'" in its positive attitude towards death and negative depiction of life. Death is praised for its "pokoj", whereas life is vilified for its burdens, constraints and misery. Life is regarded as a prison, and death as an escape from that prison.

The second part of this poem, however, shows an ideational turnabout. This change occurs rapidly:

No vskore mnimaja rešimost' pozabyta,
I tomnoj slabosti duša moja otkryta.

He acknowledges that he is weak, but explains that the grave - a metaphor for death - is

now "strašna" to him, because near ones, friends, his future, his youth and, significantly, poetry, the "obeščanija" of the muse, all seductively strengthen the bonds of life. And he acknowledges, in the final couplet, that, for all his "love of death" in the first part of the poem, he is in fact searching hard for a pretext to live, rather than to die:

I daleko išču, kak žrebij moj ni strog,
Ja žit' i bedstvovat' uslužlivyj predlog.

Metaphors, as in the first part, enhance the expressiveness of this part of the poem : promises of poetic inspiration are "obeščanija v grudi sokrytoj muzy", and instead of life's "cepi" we hear of the strengthening of life's "uzy", a positive word, since "bonds" here, in this context, have no negative associations, but stand in meaningful opposition to the "cepi" of the first section. And, in this section, the number of lofty terms is reduced, indicating a less solemn tone. Two notable words of this type, however, are "grjaduščee" and "žrebij", both of which look towards the future and consequently impart strong life-affirming overtones to the final part. Compositionally, the conclusion of the poem on a life-affirming note gives thematic precedence to that note.

We see, therefore, that the central message of "Smert'.(Podražanie A. Šen'e)" is that, even though death may seem to offer a promise of peace and rest, the poet is reluctant to die. It is implied that his reluctance is largely influenced by fear, which induces him to seek, however difficult it may be to find them, pretexts to justify his living - and, paradoxically, to bear his suffering. For life is still not depicted altogether positively; indeed, death is drawn in a more positive light than life, but life is shown to exert a much stronger pull than death - such a strong pull that man becomes literally, bound to life, its prisoner.

It is evident that the three poems which have been discussed share a common feature: each one juxtaposes life with death. "Poslednjaja smert'" and "Smert'(Podražanie A. Sen'e)" both depict death positively as offering peace and tranquillity. In "Poslednjaja smert'", the poet would arguably prefer to see life lived wisely and to the full, and the gradual degeneration and eventual death of all life is fundamentally tragic. Consequently, "Poslednjaja smert'" may be viewed as a fundamentally life-affirming, rather than a death-affirming, work. "Smert' (Podražanie A. Šen'e)", is also a life-affirming poem, and this to a greater degree than "Poslednjaja smert'".

By contrast, in "Čerep" Baratynskij's lyrical persona finds nothing attractive in death's attributes, but rather thinks it best that death leave the living well alone until the appropriate hour. The protagonist of "Čerep" has no desire whatsoever, even fleetingly, to experience death for himself.

Hence, it can be seen that all three poems, in contrast with most of the works which have been considered in the preceding chapter, are fundamentally life-affirming. However, one might agree with Kjetsaa in believing that such life-affirmation by Baratynskij was more an attempt to escape from the unpleasant thoughts which were tormenting him than it was a natural expression of the poet's "Weltanschauung". This may well be so, since Baratynskij was of an exceptionally "gloomy" disposition and must have needed relief from time to time from the shroud of morbidity which tended to weigh him down. However, "Čerep", "Poslednjaja smert'" and "Smert' (Podražanie A. Šen'e)" are hardly ideal vehicles for escaping unpleasant thoughts, for, although they may advocate life over death, they acknowledge death's inevitability and proximity, its perpetual menace. One is led to the conclusion, therefore, that a thoroughly "life-affirming" poem is uncommon in the works of Baratynskij.

IV. Pleasure and Pain

Whereas the preceding chapter focused upon examples of Baratynskij's poetry which juxtapose life with death, this chapter shall turn to prominent examples in which happiness is juxtaposed with the lack of happiness or with pain and sorrow. The poet appears to have spent much of his life on a quest for lasting happiness, unadulterated by grief or pain - but he eventually comes to regard such questing as a form of deluded behaviour. The poems to be examined are: "Poslanie k B(aronu) Del'vigu" (1820)[17], "Vesna" (1820), "Vesel'e i Gore" (1824), "D(el'vig)u" (1825), and "Doroga žizni" (1825).

The first of these, "Poslanie k B(aronu) Del'vigu" (1820), consists of fourteen stanzas with an ABAB rhyme-scheme and alternating iambic hexameter and iambic tetrameter within the lines of each stanza). It contains evidence of the early evolutionary stage of Baratynskij's thought regarding the attainability or unattainability of happiness, pleasures or contentment.

Poslanie k B[aronu] Del'vigu

1 Gde ty, bespečnyj drug? gde ty, o Del'vig moj,
2 Tovariščˇ radostej minuvščix,
3 Tovariščˇ jasnyx dnej, nedavno nado mnoj
4 Mečtoj veseloju mel'knuvšix?

5 Užel' duše tvoej tak skoro čuždym stal
6 Drug otlučennyj, drug dalekoj,
7 Na finskix beregax, meždu pustynnyx skal,
8 Brodjaščij s grust'ju odinokoj?

9 Gde ty, o Del'vig moj! užel' minuvšix dnej
10 Liš' mne čuvstvitel'na utrata,
11 Uzel' ne iščešˇ ty v krugu svoix druzej
12 Sud'boj ottorženogo brata?

13 Ty pomniš'-li te dni, kogda ruka s rukoj,
14 Pylaja žaždoj sladostrast'ja,
15 My žizni vverilis' i obščeju tropoj
16 Pomčalis' za mečtoju sčast'ja?

17 "Čto v slave? čto v molve? na vremja žizn' dana!"
18 Za polnoj čašej my tverdili
19 I veselo v strujax blestjaščego vina
20 Zabven'e sladostnoe pili.

21 I vot spustilas' noč', i vse v glubokom sne!

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[17]Gofman, op.cit., pp.13-14.

Liš' dyšit vlažnaja proxlada,
Liš' slabo teplitsja v tumannoj vyšine
Diany blednaja lampada.

S ulybkoj budit nas maljutka Kupidon.--
Pust' dremlet truženik ustalyj!
Prosnites', junoši! Dlja vas li", šepcet on,
Pokoj bescuvstvennyj i vjalyj?"

Smotrite : vidite-l', pokinuv lože sna,
Pered oknom polu-odeta,
S toskoju strastnoju ne vas-li ždet ona,
Ne vas-li ždet moja Lileta?"

Ona! -- o nega čuvst! o sladkie mečty!
Sčastliv, kto legkoju rukoju
Vesnoj umel sryvat' vesennie cvety
I v mire žil s samim soboju;

Kto prenebreg sudom zavistlivyx i zlyx
I, ravnodušiem bogatyj,
Za carstvo ne otdast pokoja sladkij mig
Il' naslaždenija mig krylatyj!

Davno rumjanyj Feb prognal nočnuju ten',
Davno prosnulisja zaboty, --
A balovnej Xarit ešče pokoit len'
Na lože negi i dremoty.

I Lila spit ešče! Ljuboviju gorjat
Mladye, svežie lanity,
I, mnitsja, poceluj skvoz' tonkij son manjat
Ee usta poluotkryty.

I gde že dom utex? gde čaš veselyj stuk?
Zabyt druz'jami drug zaočnoj,
Isčezli radosti, kak v vixre slabyj zvuk,
Kak blesk zarnicy polunočnoj!

I ja, pevec utex, teper' utratu ix
Poju v toske uedinennoj,
I vody čuzdye šumjat u nog moix,
I breg nevidim otdalennoj.

This poem belongs to the genre of the "familiar letter", or "družeskoe poslanie", a literary form which enjoyed considerable popularity in Russia from approximately 1808 to 1825. The foremost practitioners of familiar correspondence were the members of "Arzamas", a playful literary society whose number included such distinguished figures as Batjuškov, Puškin, and A.I. Turgenev. William Mills Todd III names some typical features of the

familiar letter:

> "a self-depreciating persona who is concerned with literature and friendship, who describes people in literary terms, who plays with words, ... who composes a letter in chains of associations..."[11]

Some of these features are indeed present in the poem under review. It is in the form of a direct address to Baratynskij's intimate friend, Baron Del'vig, one of the poets of the Lycée circle; and it is his response to Del'vig's "poslanie", "Evgeniju" (1820).[12] When Baratynskij wrote it, he had just been transferred to Finland, shortly after having been made a noncommissioned officer in the Russian army. As has previously been mentioned, he and his friends tended to regard this sudden transfer as "exile". The poet's despondency in these alien surroundings is very evident from the first stanza of this poem, where he calls out plaintively:

Gde ty, bezpečnyj drug? gde ty, o Del'vig moj,
Tovarišč radostej minuvščix,
Tovarišč jasnyx dnej, nedavno nado mnoj
Mečtoj veseloju mel'knuvšix?

One feels at once that the tone is almost that of a love poem, the intimacy which exists between the two men being clearly indicated by the use of "ty" and by "Del'vig moj". Baratynskij reinforces the impression of closeness by the repetition, in lines two and three, of "tovarišč"; and the repetition of "Gde ty" lends an urgent note to the poem's introduction. Del'vig is referred to as "bezpečnyj", an adjective which brings into stark relief the poet's own state, which is very far from carefree. The sense that joys have gone - that they are felt to be in the past - is imparted by the use of "minuvšie" and reinforced by the phrase, "...nedavno nado mnoj / Mečtoj veseloju mel'knuvšix?"

The second stanza is imbued with an atmosphere of self-pity, as the poet attempts to rouse empathy in Del'vig. One is struck by the melancholy tone of lines six, seven and eight, where the poet indeed appears to feel very sorry for himself in his alienation as a:

Drug otlučennyj, drug dalekoj,
Na finskix beregax, meždu pustynnyx skal,

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[11] W. Mills Todd III, The Familiar Letter as a Literary Genre in the Age of Pushkin (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), p.3, p.8, p.198, p.200.
[12] E. Kuprejanova and I. Medvedeva, op.cit., p.336.

Brodjaščij s grust'ju odinokoj...

And the message which Baratynskij is attempting to impart - that Del'vig should remember with sympathy his good friend, who is now so far away and so lonely, is emphasized via the repetition of "drug" in line six, and by the alliteration of "drug" and "dalekoj".

The "Gde ty, o Del'vig moj!" of line nine echoes the first line of the poem, just as the "užel'" of lines nine and eleven echoes the first line of the second stanza - and such repetitions, along with the expression "ottoržennyj brat" serve to intensify the reproachful tone of this part of the poem. Such recurrent terms, involve, as Dees notes, roughly half of all the poem's three hundred words. [90]

The air of reproachfulness is modified, in the fourth stanza, to become one of reminiscence, of "nostalgia". Baratynskij asks Del'vig whether he remembers the days when the two friends, hand-in-hand and "pylaja žaždoj sladostrast'ja", entrusted themselves to life and began to rush along a common path "za mečtoju sčast'ja".

While feeling lustful passions, they did not yet feel happiness itself. Happiness was a mere dream-like spectre after which one chased, but which one could never capture. This idea is a recurrent one in Baratynskij's work: people have many dreams - and particularly dreams of happiness - but those dreams are rarely, if ever, realised, even though one may pursue them for an entire lifetime.

Line seventeen, in the fifth stanza, recalls their enthusiastic youthful cry, repeated over a full cup of wine:

"Čto v slave? čto v molve? na vremja žizn' dana!"

The epicurean overtones of this stanza (noted by Dees[91]), which call to mind the classic epicurean cry "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die!", are enhanced by its two concluding lines,

I veselo v strujax blestjaščego vina
Zabven'e sladostnoe pili.

The oblivion-inducing wine of which they partake, although drunk in the process of making merry, is construably relatable to the river Lethe in ancient Greek mythology, whose water, when drunk, produced the same effect.

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[90]Dees, op.cit, p.47.
[91]Dees, op.cit., p.109.

A curtain is suddenly drawn on this scene in the sixth stanza, where night falls - an almost mystical metaphor for the state into which the poet and his friend have progressed. The entire stanza is an extended metaphor for that changed condition: one no longer of vibrant, voluptuous life - but, rather, of a kind of sleep, an only semi-alive state:

I vot spustilas' noč', i vse v glubokom sne!
Liš' dysit vlažnaja proxlada,
Liš' slabo teplitsja v tumannoj vyšine
Diany blednaja lampada.[92]

The anaphoric repetition of "liš'" underlines the message that there is nothing but a damp breeze and "Diana's pale lamp" to relieve the state of "limbo". Diana's lamp, an extension of the mythological overtones earlier suggested by the oblivion-inducing wine, is, of course, a metaphor for the moon (Diana being the Roman goddess of the moon), and the moon's paleness is in stark contrast to the former sunlike brightness of the "blestjaščee vino". Another mythological figure enters the scene in the seventh stanza. Cupid (the Roman god of love) wakens the sleeping youths with a smile, announcing that the "truženik ustalyj" is the one who should be allowed to slumber. Slumber is, however, not yet appropriate for these young men, as Cupid informs them in no uncertain terms:

"Prosnites', junoši! Dlja vas li'", šepčet on,
"Pokoj bescuvstvennyj i vjalyj?"[93]

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[92]In the revised version (pp.59-60), published according to an 1835 revision, the corresponding stanza reads:

I vot sgustilas' noč', i vse v glubokom sne -
Liš' dyšit vlažnaja proxlada;
Na stognax tišina! sijajut pri lune
Dvorcy i bašni Petrograda.

"Sgustilas' noč'" suggests that night was already present to some degree, and that it simply became denser - in contrast to the more sudden and dramatic "spustilas'". And a greater element of specificity and directness is rendered by "dvorcy i bašni Petrograda" and "luna".

[93] Ibid. The corresponding stanza is as follows:

K znakomcu dobromu stučitsja Kupidon, -
Pust' dremlet truženik ustalyj!
Prosnisja, junoša, otvergni, - šepčet on, -
Pokoj bescuvstvennyj i vjalyj."

One notes that, here, Cupid knocks at the door of one person, rather than of "nas", and thus the poet's sense of separateness is underlined. And the message given here is more assertive: rather than being asked whether peace is for him, the addressee is commanded to spurn it. It is understood that this "dear acquaintance" is, in fact, Del'vig. The poet's alienation is all the greater in that he is no longer a partcipant in the sensual scene which follows.

Cupid proceeds, in the eighth stanza, to offer a lure to the youths, in order to persuade them to leave the state of peace which he scorns:

"Smotrite: vidite-l', pokinuv lože sna,
Pered oknom polu-odeta,
S toskoju strastnoju ne vas-li ždet ona,
Ne vas-li ždet moja Lileta?"[94]

The god of love is tempting them with the prospect of "moja Lileta", half-dressed before the window, who is awaiting these youths with passionate longing - she herself having spurned the "lože sna". The poet and Del'vig are encouraged to follow her example: that is, to reject peace in favour of life-affirming voluptuousness, thirst for pleasures, and dreams of happiness. Cupid's lure is indicated to have been effective by the poet's reaction in line thirty-three:

Ona! - o nega čuvstv! o sladkie mečty!

She, in the poet's eyes, represents all that is voluptuous, and the sweetness of dreams - and his passionate nostalgia for such sensations is underlined by the repetition of "o", and by the three exclamation-marks which are contained in this line. Baratynskij expresses approval, in the next three lines, of the person who knows how and when to grasp the pleasures of life, how to attain happiness, and how to live at peace with himself:

Sčastliv, kto legkoju rukoju [95]
Vesnoj umel sryvat' vesennie cvety
I v mire žil s samim soboju...

The metaphor of "picking flowers" in springtime represents pleasures, joys and happiness, and spring symbolises the "season" of life during which such sweet blossoms are available.

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[94]Ibid. In the revised version, the corresponding stanza reads as follows:
"Vzgljani! ty vidiš' li: pokinuv lože sna,
Pered oknom, poluodeta,
Tomlen'ja strastnogo v duše svoej polna,
Sčastlivca ždet moja Lileta?"
Notable differences here are "tomlenija strastnogo v duše svoej polna" and "sčastlivca ždet moja Lileta?'" - this version making emphatic that Lileta is waiting for, and longing for, her lover.

[95]In the revised version, lines thirty-three and thirty-four read:
Tolpa bezumnaja! naprasno ropščeš' ty!
Blažen, kto legkoju rukoju...
Line thirty-three imparts the message that complaints are futile: one's fleeting ability to attain and to make the most of joys cannot be changed, and it is therefore futile to grumble about it. "Blažen" in line thirty-four lends a spiritual overtone which is absent from the original version's "sčastliv".

To obtain the flowers deftly ("legkoju rukoju") suggests that such pleasures can be taken naturally without too much thinking, worrying, philosophising or guilt. This idea is pursued in the tenth stanza, where the poet continues to describe the nature of such a person:

Kto prenebreg sudom zavistlivyx i zlyx[96]

I, ravnodušiem bogatyj

Za carstvo ne otdast pokoja sladkij mig

Il' naslažden'ja mig krylatyj!

The poet assures us that a man who bows neither to the judgement or opinions of the envious and evil, and who values his peace and moments of pleasure (the metaphorical adjective "krylatyj" effectively suggesting pleasure's power of speeding one away from earthly cares) more than any material goods is indeed most fortunate. It is, however, questionable whether the poet himself is so fortunate.

That it is no longer the time for slumber and "pokoj" is emphasized by the eleventh stanza, in which mythological overtones are revived:

Davno rumjanyj Feb prognal nočnuju ten',

Davno prosnulisja zaboty, -

A balovnej Xarit ešče pokoit len' [97]

Na lože negi i dremoty.

Rosy Phoebe (a personification of the sun derived from Greek mythology) chased away night's shadows long ago - and it is to night, the poet believes, that peace and slumber belong, not to the daytime which now exists. Now that daytime has come, daily cares have awakened (another personification), but the idle favourites of the Charites still recline incongruously on their bed of voluptuousness and slumber. [98]

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[96]In the revised version, line thirty-seven reads:

Kto bez unynija gluboko žizn' postig

This is obviously milder and more abstract than the original version, which speaks with vehemence about disregarding the judgement of envious and malicious people.

[97]In the revised version, line forty-three reads:

A balovnja zabav ešče pokoit len'...

One notes again the excision of a mythological reference and the consistent reduction of two men to one, which adds some modesty to the scene.

[98]The Charites are figures from Greek mythology, otherwise known as the Three Graces, Aglaia, Euphrosyne and Thalia, daughters of Zeus and Eurynome and constant attendants of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty. They are young, beautiful, modest, and personifications of gracefulness. Other legends hold them to be the daughters of Helius and Aegle; Zeus and Aphrodite; or Dionysus and Aphridite.

Lila is called to mind in the twelfth stanza. She is still in that drowsy world of peace, of quasi-oblivion, which contrasts sharply with the implied state of her beholders. The description, in lines forty-five and forty-six, of the "fire of love" burning in the young girl's cheeks, however, "Ljuboviju gorjat/Mladye, svežie lanity", contrasts with the fairly neutral state in which she reposes. The poet conjectures romantically that Lila's half open lips are inviting a kiss - and he further romanticises this thought with the use of the poetic "mnitsja" and "usta", which follow upon, and compound the impression formed by the similarly elevated "mladye" and "lanity".

A return to a mood of melancholy, gloom and pessimism is seen in the two final stanzas of the poem as the recalled or imagined erotic Petrograd vignette is replaced by the time and setting in which the poet currently resides. Line forty-nine consists of two nostalgic questions:

I gde že dom utex? gde čaš veselyj stuk?[99]

The repetition of "gde" and of the question mark underlines the return to a sense of loss, self-pity and even reproachfulness. That reproachfulness is still more pointed in line fifty, where the poet accuses his friends, with whom he enjoyed good times in the past, of forgetting him, their "drug zaočnyj" - the alliterative "z" and "d" of "zabyt druz'jami drug zaočnyj" emphasizing both the current separation and the former closeness of the relationship between his friends and himself, and hence the unseemliness of his friends forgetting him. Baratynskij feels intensely and painfully the transience of those former times of pleasures and joy, and attempts to illustrate how he feels in a pair of striking similes (ll.51-52):

Isčezli radosti, kak v vixre slabyj zvuk,

Kak blesk zarnicy polunočnoj!

Joys seem no more lasting than a weak sound in a whirlwind, or the flash of northern summer lightning. For all those past joys mean nothing to him now, since he is alone and melancholy, as he confirms in the final, more subdued stanza:

I ja, pevec utex, teper' utratu ix

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[99]In the revised version, line forty-nine reads:

I gde ž brega Nevy? gde čaš veselyj stuk?

This fits in with the description in the sixth stanza of Petrograd's palaces and towers, and places greater stress upon nostalgia for a familiar city. The excision of "dom utex" is also construably a concession to modesty.

Poju v toske uedinennoj,

I vody čuždye šumjat u nog moix,

I breg nevidim otdalennoj.[100]

Ironically, the "pevec utex", the "singer of comforts", is himself now singing his own loss of them, as he dwells "v toske uedinennoj" - a rather self-pitying phrase. And the contrast between the juxtaposed "vody čuždye" making noise at his feet and the image in his mind of the longed for but distant "breg nevidim" creates a poignant image, intended to elicit empathy in Del'vig and in other readers of the poem.

As has been evident in this quite complex poem, joy and pain are quite dramatically juxtaposed, as the poet's memories of more pleasurable times impress forcibly upon him the pain of the present, which has replaced the sensuality and the peaceful slumber and "zabven'e" induced by the epicurean drink of his younger days.

Another poem in which happiness and the absence thereof are juxtaposed is the elegy "Vesna"[101] , written, as was "Poslanie k B(aronu) Del'vigu", in 1820. The critic Kjetsaa, with foundation, criticises this poem as creating a "vpečatlenie tradicionnosti i uslovnosti", and he asserts that the beginning of Batjuškov's "Poslednjaja vesna" (1815)[102] exerted a strong influence upon it. "Vesna" indeed adheres closely to elegiac convention, such as, for example, the "ubi sunt" formula, via the repetition of "gde"; and thus a strong impression of derivativeness is imparted to the reader. This work consists of six four-line stanzas in alternating lines of iambic hexameter and iambic tetrameter, with an ABAB rhyme-scheme.

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[100]Ibid. In the revised version, the final stanza reads:

I ja, pevec utex, poju utratu ix,
I vkrug menja skaly surovy,
I vody čuždye šumjat u nog moix
I na nogax moix okovy.

A notable difference here is the replacement of the cliché "toska uedinennaja" with the mention of "skaly surovy" and of "okovy" on the poet's legs. These changes render this version even more gloomy, and also much more forceful with respect to the hardships of "exile".

[101]Gofman, op.cit., pp.18-19.

[102]Kjetsaa, op.cit., p.338.

Vesna
(èlegija)

Mečty volšebnye, vy skrylis' ot očej!
Sbylisja vremeni ugrozy!
Xladeet v serdce žizn', i junosti moej
Poblekli utrennie rozy!

Blagouxannyj Maj voskresnul na lugax,
I probudilas' Filomela,
I Flora milaja, na raduŽnyx krylax,
K nam obnovlennaja sletela.

Votšče! ne dlja menja doliny i lesa
Oduševilis' krasotoju,
I svetloj radost'ju sijajut nebesa!
Ja vjanu, - vjanet vse so mnoju!

O, gde vy, prizraki nevozvratimyx let,
Bogatstvo žizni - vera v sčast'e?
Gde ty, mladogo dnja plenitel'nyj rassvet?
Gde ty, živoe sladostrast'e?

V dyxanii vesny vse žizn' mladuju p'et
I negu tajnogo želan'ja!
Vse dyšit radost'ju i, mnitsja, s kem-to ždet
Obetovannogo svidan'ja!

Liš' ja kak budto čuzd Prirode i Vesne?
Časy krylatye mel'kajut;
No radosti prinest' oni ne mogut mne
I, mnitsja, mimo proletajut.

The poem's theme is brought to our attention in the very first stanza, three lines of which conclude with an exclamation mark - thus impressing forcefully upon the reader the passion of the poet's lament. Similarly to "Poslanie k B(aronu) Del'vigu", this poem regrets the loss of "mečty volšebnye" which are no longer in sight, and which represent metaphorically the pleasures and joys of life. These have been replaced by "vremeni ugrozy", which suggest the realisation that life is spending itself, as

Xladeet v serdce žizn', i junosti moej
Poblekli utrennie rozy!

The metaphor of youth's faded morning roses communicates the poet's sensation that the best part of his youth is gone, and, at the same time, such an image harmonises gracefully with the poem's title, which evokes images of flowers and other members of nature reborn.

The mythological allusions for which Baratynskij had a predilection pervade the second stanza, where "Maj" ("May", the Roman goddess associated with Vulcan, the god of fire and metalworking) has resurrected what is fragrant in the meadows, and Philomela,[103] i.e. the nightingale,[104], has awakened; and sweet Flora (the Roman goddess of flowers), has, renewed, flown on iridescent wings "k nam", i.e., to everyone and everything in general. This stanza paints a very pretty and optimistic picture. However, the optimism is counteracted by the very next stanza:

Votšče! ne dlja menja doliny i lesa
Oduševilis' krasotoju,
I svetloj radost'ju sijajut nebesa!
Ja vjanu, - vjanet vse so mnoju!

The poet talks almost as if he feels that he is the centre of the universe, and that, if all the beauties of spring do not make him happy, regardless of how happy they make anyone else, all of this beauty is to no purpose, "votšče!". Merely because he feels himself to be fading, (the idea of "fading" also harmonising with the subject of spring and the flourishing and fading cycles of nature), he announces, dramatically and with extreme egocentricity: "vjanet vse so mnoju!". This "pessimistic", cynical mood is continued in lines thirteen to sixteen, where the poet plaintively asks:

O, gde vy, prizraki nevozvratimyx let,
Bogatstvo žizni - vera v sčast'e?
Gde ty, mladogo dnja plenitel'nyj rassvet?
Gde ty, živoe sladostrast'e?

The "prizraki", personified through direct address as "vy", represent fleeting years of life now gone forever. He has nothing material left from them - only phantoms, hazy memories. And implicitly he wonders whether faith in happiness is all that one really receives from life - a faith which appears not to be well-founded. This calls to mind the "pomčalis' za mečtoju sčast'ja" of "Poslanie k B(aronu) Del'vigu", where the protagonists also believed in happiness, although that belief, as in this poem, did not avert the poet's eventual melancholy fate. Here, the poet's early youth is likened to the captivating dawn

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[103]Ibid. Reminiscent of Batjuškov's "Maj veselyj" and "golos Filomely".
[104]Philomela was the Athenian princess in Greek mythology who was changed into a nightingale.

of a young day, in line fifteen's metaphor,

Gde ty, mladogo dnja plenitel'nyj rassvet?

And another "Gde ty", amplifying the poet's plaintive tone, his sense of loss, and echoing with the "Gde vy" of this stanza's first line, comes in line sixteen,

Gde ty, živoe sladostrast'e?

By contrast, a cheerful note pervades the fifth stanza, where the vibrant joyousness of spring is emphasised by an exclamation mark after each couplet. The poet is expressing to the reader what spring symbolises in his eyes : in spring's breath (a personifying metaphor for its life-giving powers), everything drinks in young life and the voluptuousness of secret desire. Everything, it seems,awaits a sacredly promised meeting:

... s kem-to ždet

Obetovannogo svidan'ja!

The shared awaiting is vital and is closely associated with the springtime blossoming of romance, and other, less abstract parts of nature. However, the poet's own persona is significantly absent from this picture, a point taken up at the very beginning of the final stanza:

Liš' ja kak budto čužd Prirode i Vesne? [105]

He views himself as something of a "lišnij čelovek". The poet's sense of the rapidity of the passing of his life is emphasized by the metaphor "časy krylatye" in line twenty-two; and the poem concludes on a characteristically pessimistic note, the poet feeling acutely the pain of his "exclusion" from so much joy and beauty. The incongruity of two such contrasting phenomena as beautiful Spring and the poet's gloomy, cynical mood is rendered more stark by the image of the alienated poet watching the metaphorical flight of the winged hours flitting by:

No radosti prinest' oni ne mogut mne

I, mnitsja, mimo proletajut.

As Kjetsaa comments, nature, for Baratynskij,

"počti vsegda služit svoego roda kontrastnym fonom, ottenjajuščim nastroenie

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[105] Batjuškov likewise contrasts revivified nature with the faded protagonist in a similar line of his "Poslednjaja vesna"(1815), Kjetsaa, op.cit., p.388:

Pevec ljubvi, liš' ty unyl!

naxodjaščegosja v soprikosnovenii s nej čeloveka."[106]

The next poem to be examined, "Vesel'e i Gore"(1824),[107] is, as Dees puts it, an "allegorical miniature"[108]. It consists of eight lines in iambic tetrameter, with rhyme-scheme ABABCDCD, and is in the form of three sentences, each of which is concluded with an exclamation mark.

Vesel'e i Gore

1 Ruka s rukoj Vesel'e, Gore
2 Pošli dorogoj bytija;
3 No čto? - possorilisja vskore
4 Protivno-nravnye druz'ja!
5 Liš' perekrestok uvidali,
6 Drug drugu molvili : "prosti!"
7 Nedolgo rozno pobluždali,
8 Črez den' sošlis' - v konce puti!

Merriment and Grief are personified (lines one and two) as walking hand-in-hand along the metaphorical "doroga bytija". Incongruous travelling companions, these "protivno-nravnye druz'ja"[109] quickly fall out and, feeling themselves to be incompatible and, therefore, better off without each other, they part company as soon as they find a crossroad (l.5)[110]. They try this for a while, each one wandering about on his own (l.7), but come together again in a mere day's time - finding that they are now, in fact, at the end of the road. The message of this allegory is that, as the other poems in this chapter intimate, pleasure and pain do not tend to be apart for long. Soon after one feels pleasure, one may feel pain again, and this certainly seems to have been, to a large degree, the poet's own experience. The economy of words in Baratynskij's communication of this idea is commendable, and, as Kjetsaa observes:

> "Svoej temoj ono neskol'ko napominaet stixotvorenie Mil'vua Plaisir et Peine, no opjat'-taki original'nost' Baratynskogo skazyvaetsja v ego umenii sosredotočit'sja na samom suščestvennom. Možno skazat', čto v 8 stixax emu udalos' vyrazit' to že samoe, čto u Mil'vua zanimaet 32 stixa."[111]

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[106]Ibid., pp.338-339.
[107]Gofman, op.cit., p.77.
[108]Dees, op.cit., p.94.
[109]In the revised version, (p.116), published according to an 1827 revision, line three reads:

Vo vsem nesxodnye druz'ja!

The change gives more emphasis to their incompatibility.
[110]In the revised version, line five reads:

Liš' perekrestok ulučili...

perhaps emphasizing their desire to find a way to part.
[111]Kjetsaa, op.cit., pp.325-326.

The next poem to be examined in this chapter is "D(el'vig)u"(1825)[112] Like "Poslanie k B(aronu) Del'vigu" before it, "D(el'vig)u" treats the incompatibility of desires, hopes and dreams of happiness with harsh reality. As Dees remarks, the vehicle by means of which this theme is treated is an "internal dialectic between passion and reason", which "is dealt with in a typically reflective manner."[113]

"D(el'vig)u", another "familiar letter", consists of three stanzas in iambic tetrameter, with a complex asymmetrical rhyme-scheme: ABABCCDEEDFGGFG in the first stanza; ABABCDCDEFEFGGHHIJIJ in the second stanza; and AAAABBCDDCEEFGFGHGHG in the final stanza. The length of the stanzas is similarly asymmetrical : fifteen lines in the first, twenty in the second, and twenty in the third.

D[el'vig]u

Ja bezrassuden - i ne divo!
No rassuditelen - li ty,
Vsegda presleduja revnivo
Moi ljubimye mečty!
"Ne dlja neja prjamoe čuvstvo;
Odno kovarnoe iskusstvo
Ja vižu v Delii tvoej;
Ne ver' prelestnice lukavoj:
Samoljubivoju zabavoj
Tvoi vostorgi služat ej".
Ne obnaružu ja dosady,
I pronicatel'nost' tvoja
Xvaly dostojna, verju ja;
No ne naxodit v nej otrady
Duša smjatennaja moja.

Ja vspominaju golos nežnyj
Šalun'i laskovoj moej,
Rečej otkrytyx sklad nebrežnyj,
Ogon' lanit, ogon' očej;
Ja vspominaju den' razluki,
Poslednij, dolgij razgovor,
I polnyj negi, polnyj muki
Na mne pokoivšijsja vzor;
Ja perecityvaju stroki,
Gde, uvlečenija polna,
V ljubvi sčastlivye uroki
Mne samomu daet ona.
I govorju v toske glubokoj:
"Uzel' obmanut ja zestokoj?
Il' vse dosel' v bezumnom sne
Bezumno čudilosja mne?
O, strašno mne razuveren'e
I ob odnom mol'ba moja:
Da večnym budet zabluždenie,

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[112]Gofman, op.cit.,pp.78-80.
[113]Dees, op.cit., p.50.

35 Da vek bezumcem budu ja..."

36 Kogda že s veroju naprasnoj
37 Vzyvaju ja k sud'be gluxoj,
38 I vskore opyt rokovoj
39 Očam dostavit svet užasnoj,-
40 Pojdu ja strannikom togda
41 Na kraj zemli, tuda, tuda,
42 Gde večnyj xolod obitaet,
43 Gde ponevole stynet krov',
44 Gde, možet byt', sama ljubov'
45 V ozjablom serdce potuxaet...
46 Il' net, podumavši putem,
47 Ostanus' ja v uglu moem,
48 Skažu, vzdoxnuv : "Gorjun nelovkoj,
49 Grust' prostodušnaja smešna;
50 Ne lučše-l' plutom byt' s plutovkoj,
51 Šutit' ljubov'ju, kak ona?
52 Ja ob obmanščice toskuju,
53 Kak zdravym smyslom ja ubog!
54 Užel' obmanščicu druguju
55 Mne ne pošlet v otradu Bog?"

The poem's lack of symmetry fits in with the confusion in the poet's mind and his emotions at the time of writing, as he responds to advice from Del'vig regarding the woman with whom Baratynskij believes himself to be in love. This woman is referred to by the stereotypical name "Delija", which seems to indicate either that Baratynskij is not being deeply personal or else that he is modestly and tactfully concealing his real beloved's name. Whichever is the case, the closeness of her name to Del'vig's adds a light touch. He frankly admits his lack of cool rationality in the first line of the first stanza:

Ja bezrassuden - i ne divo!

But he implies that his own "recklessness", which we will see as being prompted by passion, has its equivalent in Del'vig's critical sobermindedness (ll.2-4):

No rassuditelen-li ty,
Vsegda presleduja revnivo
Moi ljubimye mečty!

The common motif in Baratynskij's poetry of "dreams" of pleasure, happiness and so on has become a familiar one to us.

Lines five to ten quote Del'vig's advice to his friend. He warns Baratynskij of Delija's perfidious art (l.6) and cunning charm (l.8), and, declining to blunt the knife, offers what may, indeed, be nothing but a prejudiced opinion: that,

Samoljubivoju zabavoj

Tvoi vostorgi služat ej.

The poet conceals any wounded pride in a controlled response (ll.11-13) which expresses appreciation of Del'vig's well-meaning advice and incisiveness, but on a deeply personal and emotional level he questions its worth:

No ne naxodit v nej otrady
Duša smjatennaja moja.

Whereas the first stanza focuses upon the poet's correspondence with Del'vig, and bears overtones of their intimate friendship, the second becomes a reverie upon the beloved "Delija", one which provides a basis for his rejection of Del'vig's reasoned advice. An important opposition exists between Del'vig's condemnatory words with reference to the girl in the first stanza and the second stanza's positive adjectives and affectionate terms, such as "golos nežnyj" (l.16), and "šalun'ja laskovaja moja" (l.17). The second stanza presents, besides, a picture of a girl who feels genuine emotions, with her "ogon' lanit, ogon' očej" (l.19) and "...polnyj negi, polnyj muki/ Na mne pokoivšijsja vzor" (ll.22-23) (the repetition of "polnyj" here stressing the depth of Delija's feelings); and "...uvlečenija polna/ V ljubvi sčastlivye uroki/ Mne samomu daet ona."(ll.25-26)

One notes the appearance of "Ja vspominaju" in both line sixteen and line twenty, which is echoed by "Ja perečityvaju" (l.24), and by "govorju" (l.28). All of these, supplemented by many other pronominal references to the poet's own persona, indicate that this stanza is hardly devoted exclusively to the poet's beloved. One arrives, instead, at the conclusion that the poet himself is in fact the focal point of his own attention. That this is the case is more frankly confirmed in lines twenty-nine to thirty-five, which are presumably Baratynskij's answer to Del'vig's advice. He wonders whether he can really have been deceived by a cruel woman, whether (ll.30-31):

"...vse dosel' v bezumnom sne
Bezumno čudilosja mne?" [114]

The echo of "bezumnom" by "bezumno" reinforces the notion of madness. He dreads the prospect of disillusionment with his "beloved", to which he would much prefer:

Da večnym budet zabluždenʹe,

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[114]In the revised version (pp.116-118), published according to an 1835 revision, line thirty-one reads:

Ili vse, vse v bezumnom sne...

Here, the repetition of "vse" is a sign of the poet's heightened emotional state.

Da vek bezumcem budu ja...

These final two lines of the stanza are imbued with sound repetitions [d,b,v,z] which cement semantically the poet's insistence on everlasting illusion having precedence over a clear perception of reality. And here, again, we receive Baratynskij's recurrent message that he who lives in a dream is happier than he who knows the stark truth of reality.

Yet another tangent is pursued in the final stanza; for, here, the poet ventures out of the shelter of the "dream" in which he presently resides. He imagines what he will do when fate is deaf to his appeals, and experience causes his eyes to be opened. This dreaded "fateful experience", "opyt rokovoj", will induce him to see, at last, the "svet užasnyj", a metaphor for the truth and a corroboration of Del'vig's view. Still, to this he responds initially with a picture of isolated, "romantic" flight.

Pojdu ja strannikom togda,
Na kraj zemli, tuda, tuda,
Gde večnyj xolod obitaet,
Gde ponevole stynet krov',
Gde, možet byt', sama ljubov'
V ozjablom serdce potuxaet...

The striking repetitions of "tuda" (l.41) and of "gde" (ll.42, 43 and 44) reinforce the concept of the extreme remoteness of the place at the "edge of the earth" to which the poet contemplates wandering alone, as if to experience in an extreme form the atrophy of feeling and the isolation which are implied by Del'vig's view of life. Suddenly, however, he changes his mind and sets this idea aside, deciding instead to take a more pragmatic point of view:

Ne lučše-l' plutom byt' s plutovkoj,
Šutit' ljubov'ju, kak ona?

The echo of "plutom" with "plutovkoj" creates a humorous impression, which is reinforced by "šutit'". He envisions a new beloved, a faceless entity, a "stereotype", without an individual personality to match his own. In the final five lines, she is referred to simply as "ona" and "obmanščica". The repetition of "obmanščica" here represents a juxtaposition of two - and not one and the same - deceivers:

Ja ob obmanščice toskuju,

Kak zdravym smyslom ja ubog!
Užel' obmanščicu druguju
Mne ne pošlet v otradu Bog?

One is struck by the poet's progression from: infatuation with his "beloved", which he hopes will continue forever; to ambitious declarations of the drastic action which he would take if disillusioned; to this final, surprisingly pragmatic attitude, imbued with the "common sense" in which he claims to be so poor, and which he has opposed. The final wish that God may send him comfort in the form of another "obmanščica", once he has received his disillusionment regarding the present one, seems odd. To wish for another woman of the same type as the one who causes him pain seems somewhat masochistic, to say the least - for it is by no means certain that he would make a pain-free exit out of either relationship, despite his scheme of behaving like a "knave" and treating the relationship lightly. Arguably, the poet has not capitulated to Del'vig's rationalistic outlook, but still needs to live with illusions. In any case, here again we have the juxtaposition of happiness and pain: the present happiness of infatuation, and the potential of future pain through disillusionment. While, ironically, "love" may cause the poet pain in the future, it has at least allowed him to attain some happiness, and not merely "dreams" of happiness.

The final poem to be examined here is the short "Doroga žizni" (1825),[115] which bears many features reminiscent of "Vesel'e i Gore". Like "Vesel'e i Gore", it consists of one stanza of eight lines in iambic tetrameter, with an ABABCDCD rhyme-scheme. Its theme is a similarly abstract one: that of the disillusionment resulting from the "golden dreams" carried through life by men.

Doroga žizni

1 V dorogu žizni snarjažaja
2 Svoix synov, bezumcev nas,
3 Snov zolotyx sud'ba blagaja
4 Daet izvestnyj nam zapas.
5 Nas bystro gody počtovye
6 S korčmy dovozjat do korčmy,
7 I snami temi putevye
8 Progony žizni platim my.

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[115]Gofman, op.cit., p.83.

As Dees comments, it is an "eight-line miniature built on the development of a single metaphor which becomes an allegory; the unfolding metaphor is constantly supported by appropriate terminology."[116] As its title indicates, the "unfolding metaphor" is that of the "road of life", which represents the life-process. The poem is divided into two equal parts, the first portraying the illusions, the "golden dreams", of one who is starting out on life's path, and the second revealing the corresponding disillusionment as life nears its end, the "golden dreams" having served to pay life's "travelling expenses". Human beings are figuratively referred to as being the mad sons of a kind fate, who are equipped for their journey, as by a loving mother, with a certain stock ("izvestnyj zapas") of "golden dreams" (presumably idealistic dreams of happiness, glory and so on). The incongruous juxtaposition of the prosaic expression, "izvestnyj zapas" with the loftily poetic "sud'ba blagaja" highlights the "golden dreams" and creates a certain semantic symmetry with the poem's final two lines. The reason for the poet's allegation that we are "bezumcy" becomes clearer in the second part of the poem, where the "gody počtovye" (a metaphorical suggestion that the swiftly-passing years resemble speedy mail-coaches) lead us quickly "s korčmy ... do korčmy", the metaphorical stages in the journey of life, without fulfilment of our *mad*, golden dreams, which are used up on life's "putevye progony" - in other words are dissipated by disillusionment during the process of one's life. The difference in tone between this part of the poem and the first part is highlighted by the transformation of the rhyming vowel from (a) in the first part to (y) in the second part, and also by the descending lexical level, from the first part's "syny", "zolotoj" and "blagoj" to the more prosaic "gody počtovye", "korčma" and "progony" of the second part.

In this poem, therefore, the juxtaposition is of dreams of happiness - that recurrent motif - and of the pain of the disillusionment which results from the lack of fulfilment of these dreams. Of the previous poems discussed during this chapter, two others fall into this category: "Poslanie k B(aronu) Del'vigu", with its "mečta sčast'ja" and eventual misery of loneliness and isolation, and "Vesna", with its questioning of life's wealth and a belief in happiness, ("bogatstvo žizni", "vera v sčast'e") are strongly redolent of "Doroga žizni's" "bogatstvo", its store of "snov zolotyx". The remaining two poems, "D(el'vig)u" and "Vesel'e i Gore", treat the experiencing of happiness ("Vesel'e i Gore"

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[116]Dees, op.cit., p.53.

allegorically), as opposed to mere dreams of happiness: but pain is not far separated from this happiness. In "D(el'vig)u", pain is a very real potentiality; in "Vesel'e i Gore", a certainty.

Confronted with such manifestations of the poet's "Weltanschauung", one feels drawn towards a concurrence with the words of the critic J.A. Harvie:

> "Baratynskij regards the governance of the universe as evil, and of such a nature as inevitably to frustrate man's best aspirations .... For Baratynskij ... truth and happiness are incompatible - 'though a few flickerings of joy, based on illusion, may be vouchsafed to the young; apart from this, suffering is the manifest destiny of all the earthly descendants of Prometheus."[117]

The phrasing "sud'ba blagaja" in "Doroga žizni" may lead one to dispute Harvie's comment that Baratynskij regards the governance of the universe as evil. Such a phrasing, however, when taken in the overall context of Baratynskij's verse, does not seem to be a significant reflection of Baratynskij's view of the universe, which, for the most part, remains profoundly pessimistic.

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[117] J.A. Harvie, "The Eclipse of the Golden Age", Forum for Modern Language Studies, vol. 12, pp. 187-188.

V. Conclusion

In the foregoing study of life-affirmation and death-affirmation in Baratynskij's lyrical poetry, some useful insights have been obtained, a major one of which is that death-affirmation, taken in a broad sense with attendant features, has been found to predominate over life-affirmation. The death-affirming concepts of peace and passivity were, as discussed in the second chapter, shown to be favoured over life-affirming "turmoil" in "Rodina (Sel'skaja èlegija)"(1821), "Dve doli"(1823), "Beznadežnost'" (1823) and "Smert'"(1828). In only one of the five poems from this chapter, "Istina", are passivity and peace dismissed as belonging more to death than to life. In the juxtaposition of life and death in the poems considered in chapter three, "Čerep"(1824) and "Poslednjaja smert'"(1827) were shown to favour life-affirming passions, whereas "Smert' (Podražanie A. Sen'e)" (1828), while expressing a fear of death, and the consequent desire to seek a pretext for living, praises death's "pokoj" and condemns life's "jarmo". And, in the fourth chapter's juxtaposition of happiness and the lack of happiness, or even pain or sorrow, grim, death-oriented aspects of "Poslanie k B(aronu) Del'vigu" (1820), "Vesna" (1820), "Vesel'e i Gore" (1824) and "Doroga žizni" (1825) strongly outweigh the life-affirmation of "D(el'vig)u" (1825).

As has been mentioned in the introductory chapter, Baratynskij's inclination towards death-affirmation seems to have stemmed to a large degree from the basic orientation of his personality, which was intensified by his life-experiences - for example, the disgrace following his conviction for theft as a boy, and his subsequent "exile" in Finland. His avid reading , encouraged by his Italian tutor, of Romantic literature, French in particular, with its fashionable "melancholy" tone, also had its effect, as did his acquaintance with many distinguished Russian romantic poets of the day, whose outlook on life probably served to reinforce Baratynskij's own personal convictions. Baratynskij's education and acquaintances were due to his having belonged to an elevated social class. Social position could also have been a factor in the development of his indulgence in "melancholia", a luxury more easily afforded by the wealthy of early nineteenth-century Russia than by, for example, the hard-driven serfs, whose lot in life probably entitled them more to melancholy than Baratynskij's own. Still, the political atmosphere of Baratynskij's time was grim and undoubtedly also played a role in reinforcing his predilection for

pessimism.

The utility of the foregoing study lies in the light which it sheds upon Baratynskij's lyrical persona, his personal outlook or view of the world. Life-affirmation and death-affirmation are two fundamental and polarised aspects of philosophy and existence - and their prominence in Baratynskij's work indicates that they are a worthwhile focus in research relating to him.

Such a study also provides a "peephole" into the "mood" of the time. To the extent that works are reflective of the era in which they are written, Baratynskij's work also serves to a certain degree as an indicator of the intellectual and literary reality of the period during which he lived and wrote. While Baratynskij, like any author to some degree or other, clearly owed much to the literary conventions of his day, an examination of his poetry reveals much of the originality and mastery which allowed him to stand out from a crowd of contemporary poets. Additionally, the scrutiny of his textual revisions, while not the focal point of this study, has revealed a tendency towards greater originality, force and specificity of expression - traits which were undoubtedly indicative of literary developments affecting Russian literature in an advanced stage of Romanticism.

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